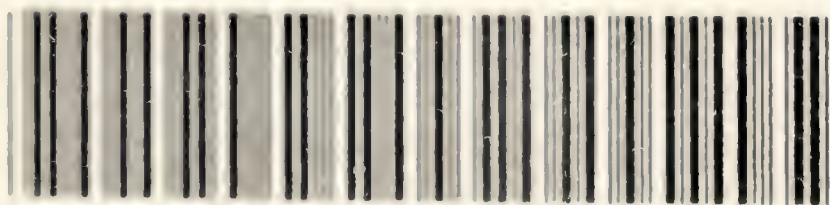






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SEXUAL LIFE OF PRIMITIVE PEOPLE



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OF  
PRIMITIVE PEOPLE

BY  
H. FEHLINGER

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## PREFACE

To most lay people the established order of sex relationships and marriage seems something so self-evident and stable that they cannot conceive the possibility of a variation in the established order. Yet here, as in all things, the law of evolution applies. Our sexual system is the outcome of a long continuous series of changes beginning with the very dawn of human history. To understand the modern sex problem rightly it is essential to know its origin and gradual development.

Most of the material about the sex life of primitive people is inaccessible to the ordinary reader, being hidden away in learned treatises and ponderous scientific works. The translators are, therefore, glad to have found in Fehlinger's book a short comprehensive outline of the subject, which may serve as a convenient introduction.

S. H.  
F. H.

MANCHESTER,  
*July, 1921.*



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# SEXUAL LIFE OF PRIMITIVE PEOPLE

## I

### MODESTY AMONG PRIMITIVE PEOPLE

IN cold and temperate climates, it is necessary to clothe the body as a protection against cold. In hot parts of the world, the need for protection against the effects of the weather by means of clothing disappears, and therefore in those regions primitive people go about naked. It is only when they come under the influence of foreign civilisation that they put on clothing. It is erroneous to assume that clothing came into use because of an inborn sexual modesty. In Australia, in the Indonesian and Melanesian islands, in tropical Africa, and in South America, there are still many peoples that go about naked. It is true that many of them cover their sex organs ; but the contrivances used for this purpose are not in reality intended to hide the sex region, though to our mind they seem to do so.

Primitive people do not cover their bodies out of modesty ; “ the sinfulness of nakedness ” is unknown to them. Karl von den Steinen (pp. 190, 191) says

that the naked Indian tribes of the Xingu region of Brazil know no secret parts of the body. " They joke about these parts in words and pictures quite unabashed, so that it would be foolish to call them indecent. They are envious of our clothing, as of some precious finery ; they put it on and wear it in our presence with a complete disregard of the simplest rules of our own society, and in complete ignorance of its purpose. This proves that they still possess the pristine guilelessness of Adam and Eve in Eden. Some of them celebrate the advent of puberty in members of both sexes by noisy festivals, when the ' private parts ' come in for a good deal of general attention. If a man wishes to inform a stranger that he is a father, or a woman that she is a mother, they gravely denote the fact by touching the organs from which life springs, in a most spontaneous and natural manner. It is, therefore, not possible to understand these people properly unless we put aside our conception of ' clothing,' and take them and their manners in their own natural way."

The absence of sexual modesty in our sense also struck von Steinen when questions about words arose. If he asked about a word which to our minds might give cause for shame, the reply was given without hesitation or any semblance of shame. Nevertheless, conversations about sexual subjects gave the Indians, men and women, decided pleasure ; but their merry laughter was " neither impudent, nor did it give the



impression of hiding an inward embarrassment. It had, however, a slightly erotic tone, and resembled the laughter aroused by the jokes in our own spinning-rooms, by games of forfeits, and by other harmless jokes exchanged in intercourse between the sexes, although the occasions and accompanying circumstances must be so very different among truly primitive people."

Naked savages are, however, not devoid of sexual modesty. It shows itself immediately when any remark addressed to them can be construed as an invitation to sexual intercourse, or when coarse jokes are made about sexual subjects. This is clearly shown in an account by Koch-Grünberg (I., p. 307). His European companion wanted to perform a kind of stomach dance before some savage Indians of the Upper Rio Negro, such as is danced in places of ill repute in Brazilian towns. The very indecent movements of the dancer caused the women and girls to retire shyly. The European in his attempt to "entertain" the company failed completely. Yet one can converse quietly with these Indians on all sexual subjects so long as they are natural; it is only obscenity that shocks them.

According to Eylmann, the Australians, at least the men, show no modesty in sex matters, though they are by no means devoid of it in other respects. Thus, *e.g.*, they are ashamed of any mutilation of their bodies. Young men do not cover their sex organs, but the old

#### 4 SEXUAL LIFE OF PRIMITIVE PEOPLE

ones do so, because they seem to be aware that this part of the body, of which they were once so proud, bears signs of old age. The women also rarely make use of an apron, yet they show clearly marked sexual modesty. A woman is always very careful not to expose the external sex organs when she sits or lies down in the presence of men. The greatest decency is observed during the time of menstruation.

In Indonesia the feeling of modesty among those tribes that are in constant contact with Europeans is essentially different from that of the tribes less under foreign influence. Thus Nieuwenhuis (I., pp. 133, 134) mentions, for instance, the Bahaus and Kenyas of Central Borneo. Of these the latter are only slightly influenced by the Mohammedan Malays, the former, however, relatively much more so. Although members of both tribes bathe completely naked, yet the Bahaus dress immediately after the bath, whilst the Kenyas go naked to and from the bath. The Kenya women also go naked to the spring to bring water and to bathe their children. Whilst getting the boats through the rapids the Kenya men take off their loin-cloths, but the Bahau men never do this. When Nieuwenhuis' expedition stayed some time among the Kenyas, it was noticed that the people got out of the habit of going about naked at times. This was only because the Malays and Bahaus belonging to the expedition had told the Kenyas that the white people objected to the naked appearance of the natives (which was not



correct). Nieuwenhuis adds : “ It can thus be seen what a great *rôle* acquired modesty plays in the evolution of clothes.” The clothing of the present-day Dyaks serves as a protection against the heat of the sun, and in the mountains against cold, and as a prevention of the darkening of the skin (which, particularly in women, is considered ugly) ; it is also used as an ornament and to scare enemies, but never for the concealment of the body. The Dyaks show shame when made embarrassed before other people ; on such occasions they blush right down to the breast. Nieuwenhuis made use of this circumstance in the case of the Bahaus in order to make them keep their promises and do their duties (II., p. 296).

The Eskimos in the far north of America are, as a rule, thickly clothed ; but it is quite usual for them to go about naked in their snow huts without any thought of offending against decency.

Whoever lives for a time among naked savages becomes accustomed to their nakedness, and does not feel anything objectionable in it. Æsthetically there is this disadvantage, that the sick and the aged look very repulsive in their decline ; but then again youth and strength show off to great advantage in nakedness.

If the origin of clothing is not due to sexual modesty, it would at first appear strange that so many naked savages cover their sexual organs either completely or partly, wearing a pubic apron or some similar arrangement. The contrivances used are sometimes

## 6 SEXUAL LIFE OF PRIMITIVE PEOPLE

so small that they can hardly have been intended as coverings. Thus the women of the Karaib, Aruak, and Tupi tribes in the Xingui region all wear a triangular piece of bark bast not more than 7 centimetres wide and 3 centimetres high. The lower end of the triangle runs into a perineal strip of hard bark about 4 millimetres wide. Two narrow cords coming from the two upper ends pass along the groins, and meet the narrow perineal strip coming from the lower end of the triangle. These *uluri* only just cover the beginning of the pubic cleft, pressing tightly on it. The triangle does not reach the introitus vaginæ, which is, however, closed, or at least kept inwards, by the pressure exerted by the tightened strip of bast running from front to back. Similar binders are used by the Indian women of Central Brazil. The binder used by the Trumai women is twisted into a cord, serving still less as a cover. In fact, none of these binders serve as covers, but they are intended to close up and to protect the mucous membrane. This also applies to the binders used by the various peoples living on the islands of the Pacific Ocean, as, *e.g.*, by the Mafulus of Papua.

Various contrivances are also to be met with among many primitive men which seem to have the purpose of protecting the penis, and which really achieve that end. Among certain tribes of Brazil penis wraps made from palm straw are worn; other tribes use a T-shaped bandage, which is also very common in Polynesia, Micronesia and Melanesia. The penis is



pulled up by means of the T-bandage, the testicles remaining free. Sometimes old men use a broad band, under which they can also push the testicles. In the New Hebrides, New Caledonia, and other places, the penis is tightly bandaged, and is drawn up and fastened to the girdle by means of a cord or band, the testicles hanging free. Calabashes are also used to protect the penis. In Melanesia the penis pin goes with the calabash. Georg Friederici (p. 155) says about its use : " The penis pin, which is the shape of a wooden knitting needle, is stuck into the hair near the comb, and is often brought into use. The calabash, which serves the purpose of protecting the penis against injury in the bush and attacks from insects, has the disadvantage of easily becoming loose and filling quickly with water during swimming and wading. After every passage of a river reaching above the pubic region a halt had to be made, during which my men took off their calabashes and emptied them ; then they put a new layer of green leaves into the round opening, stuck the penis in, and, with the help of the penis pin, pushed it in until it had completely disappeared and the calabash lay close to the abdomen." When sitting round the camp fire, and at other times, the men can be seen drawing the pins from their hair and making their toilet. The covering of the penis is undoubtedly intended as a protection of the sensitive glans. Thus in the Brazilian forest the penis becomes endangered by spines of leaves being brushed off the



## 8 SEXUAL LIFE OF PRIMITIVE PEOPLE

branches and boring themselves deeply into the flesh; the spines get torn when pulled out, and cause painful inflammations. For warding off insects the women of many Indian tribes have tassels hanging in front of the sex organs. In the Northern Territory of Australia both men and women wear such tassels. There are still greater dangers in the wilderness. In Brazil there exists a small fish (*Cetopsis candiru*) which has a tendency towards boring itself into any of the exposed orifices of the body. It slips into the urethra, and is prevented by its fins from getting out again, and thus may easily bring about the death of the victim, to whom nothing remains but to attempt an impromptu operation by slitting open the urethra with his knife. Friederici remarks that it is just in those regions of tropical America where the protection of the penis is most prevalent that fish with sharp teeth (*Pygocentrus* species) are to be found which have a tendency towards attacking protruding unprotected parts of the body, thus often causing castration in men.

There is no foundation for the assumption of Adolf Gerson that men invented the apron or resorted to binding up of the penis in order to hide its erection, which would make them appear ridiculous, for sex matters do not appear ridiculous to primitive people. In fact, such contrivances cannot hide sexual excitement. Many peoples who use them do not even have the wish to keep their excitement secret. Habituation to nakedness ultimately lessens the stimulus to excite-

ment. The following fact, stated by Friederici, is worthy of notice : “ During the many months in which I lived exclusively among the natives I never saw even the slightest sign of an erection in sleeping men, nor have I ever heard or read that any one else has noticed such a thing among naked primitive peoples, untouched by civilisation. Clothing has nothing to do with sexual feelings or modesty among primitive people. To the people living in the tropics clothes are essentially ornamental ; they are worn for reasons of vanity, not out of modesty. This can be well observed in those cases where loin-cloths which actually cover up the pubic region are raised without any consideration for people present, if there is any danger of their becoming soiled or injured. The Malay women in the central part of Luzon (Philippines), when working in the fields, discard their wrappings without worrying in the least if observed by the men. It is the same in other places.

As has been said before, among some naked peoples it is the custom for the men to fasten up the penis without any covering under a hip band. In other places they tie up the foreskin with a thread. By this means protection is also given to the glans, but it is questionable whether this was always the origin of this custom. In fact, it is doubtful whether the need for protection was always the only reason for the wearing of sheaths, binders, etc., for at least among some of the people it is connected with some ceremonial which



implies its sexual significance. In the case of women, another factor may have played a *rôle*, viz., the fact that menstruation is considered an illness, as may be seen in the widespread custom of treating girls medically during menstruation. The binder may have been intended to counteract the loss of blood. The stretching of the foreskin which results from the use of penis wraps, penis binders, etc., may be looked upon as a precaution against phimosis, serving the same purpose as circumcision does among numerous peoples.

Sexual modesty with regard to the naked body cannot be considered innate in mankind, for it is unknown among many naked peoples. On the other hand, there is an instinctive tendency in man to hide from his fellows the effluvia of the sexual and digestive organs. Thus H. Ellis (p. 40) gives a good explanation of the impulse towards concealment during the sex act: "Both male and female need to guard themselves during the exercise of their sexual activities from jealous rivals, as well as from enemies who might take advantage of their position to attack them. It is highly probable that this is one important factor in the constitution of modesty, and it helps to explain how the male, not less than the female, cultivates modesty and shuns publicity in the exercise of sexual functions." The idea, begotten from fear, that sexual intercourse must be kept secret, became easily extended to the feeling that such intercourse was in itself wrong. The mystery surrounding sexual intercourse



has certainly been one of the factors leading to its concealment. Primitive man has a tendency towards endowing with supernatural powers all processes that he cannot understand; they become sacred, and hence have to be carried out in privacy. The feeling of disgust may perhaps be an additional reason for the concealment of the sex act. The objects arousing disgust vary among different peoples according to the conditions of their lives; but almost everywhere dangerous things are classed under this category, to which belong, according to the notion of primitive people, the discharges from the sexual and digestive organs. It thus comes about that primitive man is ashamed of urinating and defæcating even before persons of his own sex. Even the lowest savage will seek out a very secluded spot for the fulfilment of these functions. Thus Koch-Grünberg, for instance, says: "The Indian goes deep into the wood for a certain business, comparing favourably in this respect with our own peasants." Friederici writes of the Melanesians that they are not at all ashamed to show the sexual parts, but are extremely shy of exposing the anus, and will always avoid letting themselves be seen during defæcation. In the central districts the people betake themselves for this purpose early in the morning to some outlying place, while those living near the sea go to the beach, each person keeping as far away as possible from his neighbour. The Africans that have not yet become spoiled by contact with strangers

also seek remote places (Weule and Schweinfurth). The negroes, however, who are under Mohammedan influence, approach in this respect the beasts of the field.

The tales of licentiousness among primitive people that are to be found in old works of travel are mostly invented or grossly exaggerated. Looseness and laxity do not exist anywhere, though the unwritten laws which regulate the behaviour of the sexes are different from ours. Unbridled indulgence is nowhere to be found; the public performance of the sex act takes place only exceptionally among some peoples, and then for ceremonial purposes. Even where, on festival occasions, marital intercourse takes place as a matter of course, the couples disappear into the darkness. So far as can be judged from ethnological literature, Europeans have rarely had the opportunity of observing the sex act, and then nearly exclusively among the African negroes, who must be reckoned the most sensual of all existing peoples. (See the works of Leo Frobenius and Georg Schweinfurth.)



## II

### PRE-MARITAL FREEDOM AND CONJUGAL FIDELITY

TRAVELLERS and missionaries, seeing things merely from the standpoint of European civilisation, have for a long time attributed to primitive people conceptions of sexual behaviour like our own. But the real truth could not be hidden for long. It is now firmly established that the moral ideas of primitive people differ as widely from ours as does their sense of modesty. They do not consider sexual intercourse *per se* as immoral, and generally allow unmarried people full liberty. It is only where a more advanced civilisation leads to material considerations in the matter of sex relationship that, as a rule, this liberty is restricted or entirely in abeyance. Should any consequences ensue from the practice of free love, the lover is generally in duty bound to marry the girl. Among some tribes, however, no such obligation exists; the lover may break off his connection with the pregnant girl. Frequently in cases of pre-marital pregnancy abortion is resorted to, which is very prevalent among primitive races. Among some people, on the contrary, a girl who has had a child gets married the more easily, for she has given proof of her fertility. Besides, the child will be an additional worker in the house.



Most peoples demand conjugal fidelity from their married women, though we shall hear of some exceptions. It is certainly not correct, as Buschan (1912, p. 237) says, that the rules concerning sexual intercourse are stringent throughout for women, and that only in a childless marriage may a woman take up with another man.

Among many peoples, living so far apart as Asia, Australia, Oceania and Africa, we find that married men and women are in certain cases allowed intercourse with other persons. The full meaning of this arrangement is as yet unknown.

The idea of sexual purity is not innate nor unchangeable. Ethnographical research has fully proved that purity in our sense of the term is unknown even to-day among many peoples, and that there exist no restrictions upon sexual intercourse except for the prevention of cohabitation among blood relations. A greater or less degree of sexual liberty before marriage prevails among most of those peoples in Asia that are not under the influence of Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism. Indeed, it even exists among some uncivilised Hindu tribes, as, *e.g.*, among the lower Hindu castes of Kashmir and of the Punjab mountains, the various lower castes of Agra-Oudh, in the Central Provinces and Berar, and in Southern India; but they restrict pre-marital relationship to persons of their own community. Most Dravidian races, however, forbid intercourse between members of the same exogamic group,

though it takes place at times in spite of this. The Mongolian races generally show indifference in this respect. Thus T. C. Hudson (p. 78) says of the Nagas in Manipur that they are conspicuous for their exceptionally loose pre-marital relationship, although they demand strict fidelity in marriage. Pre-marital intercourse between persons to whom marriage is forbidden is not considered improper, which may be due to the fact that the Nagas, like the Australian tribes, are ignorant of the process of generation.

Among many native Indian tribes the grown-up children do not sleep in their parents' huts, but in houses of their own, in which they commonly visit each other by night. Should a girl become pregnant, the probable father is expected to marry her. If he refuses, he has to pay damages, and the girl is at liberty to marry some one else, which she can do without any difficulty. Sometimes abortion is resorted to, especially when both persons belong to the same exogamic group, the members of which are not allowed to intermarry. The tribes of Baroda, the Maduvars of Madras, and the Ghasyas of the United Provinces, permit a probationary period of cohabitation. It is considered no disgrace for a girl if the trial marriage does not result in a permanent marriage. Among the Garos it is an unwritten law that after certain great festivals young men and women may sleep together. Otherwise these Garos, like the tribes and castes previously referred to, are strictly monogamous.



Sexual promiscuity often occurs after feasts, and it is not restricted to the unmarried (Playfair, p. 68).

It is only seldom that unfaithfulness on the part of married women is tolerated. But there are exceptions. Gait states that in the Djamna mountains the women of the Thakkar, Megh, and other low castes lead just as unrestrained a life after marriage as before. The Djats of Baluchistan are in ill repute because they incite their married women to unfaithfulness, if any advantage can be obtained thereby for the men. Certain nomadic castes, such as the Mirasis, prostitute their women, and the love affairs of married women of the servant class meet with no opposition whatever. In the eastern region of Djamba, in the Punjab, the husband is expected to allow a guest free entrance to the women's chambers. In the western part of this province the Djats and Pathans will often take back married women who have eloped, and not rarely a husband will recognise as his own a son who may have been born while the woman was away.

In Southern India married women enjoy a great deal of sexual freedom, especially in those communities where the descent is reckoned in the female line. Where marriage between cousins is customary, grown-up girls are often married to quite young boys. During the immaturity of the husband the wife is allowed to have sexual relations with the father of her child husband or another near relation, sometimes even with any one member of the caste chosen by her.



This custom also exists in Kashmir, not only among the Ladakhis, but also among other low Hindu castes, and is also to be found in other parts of the world. Many South Indian castes allow their married women much freedom with the relatives of their husbands. The Tootiyans go so far as to forbid a husband to enter his house if he finds the door locked and a relation's shoe before it. The Maloyali, a mountain tribe, accept unfaithfulness on the part of their wives quite lightly, unless the partner belongs to another caste; if a woman lives for a time with a lover and has children during this time, the husband will on her return recognise the children as his own. The state of affairs is similar among the Kudans and Parivarams. Many low Hindu castes in North Kanara allow their women extra-marital intercourse with men of their own or of a higher caste. Among some castes, such as the Irulas and Kurumbas, formal marriage is completely unknown, an almost unbridled sexual promiscuity taking its place. A Korawa of Madras who has debts to pay either pawns or simply sells his wife. The Todas and other polyandrous communities of South India do not know jealousy (Rivers, 1906, p. 592; Iyer, I., p. 136). An exception to the rule that faithfulness in marriage is more strictly enforced than purity before marriage is to be found among the Pongalakapus of Madras, who allow extra-marital intercourse of married women, but punish that of unmarried girls and widows (Gait).

The Veddahs of Ceylon, who, according to Paul and Fritz Sarasin, are physically and intellectually of the lowest human type, practise monogamy, which lasts until the death of one of the partners. Marital unfaithfulness is rare, and leads to heavy punishment of the offending rival, who, as a rule, is assassinated. Only where foreign influence has become apparent is there a tendency to dissolve marriage before death (Paul and Fritz Sarasin).

Hose and MacDougall mention that among the nomadic hunting tribes of Inner Borneo "the women are chaster after marriage than before." Apparently neither sex practises much restraint. A girl's pregnancy generally results in her marriage with the father of the expected child. Amongst the settled tribes of Borneo a young man seeks a love affair as soon as he is attracted to the other sex; he may have relations with several girls one after another, but generally marries early. The marriage age of the men is about twenty, of the girls still earlier. There is no information about their marital fidelity.

The Dutchmen Hinlopen and Severijn state that in 1852 they found on the Poggi Islands, on the west coast of Sumatra, a state of complete promiscuity. Some of the men are said to get married, but only very late, between the ages of forty and fifty, when their detailed tattooing is completed; it is only seldom that a young man takes a separate wife. G. A. Wilken enumerates the following East Indian communities



as living in sexual promiscuity: the Lubus, the Orang-Sakai of Malacca, the Olo-Ot, and other Bornean tribes; the inhabitants of the island Peling. He adduces no evidence, however; and his statement is certainly incorrect as far as the Sakai of Malacca are concerned. Among the non-Christian tribes of the Philippine Islands considerable pre-marital liberty prevails. Among the Igorotes, *e.g.*, the dormitory of the unmarried girls (the *olag*) serves also as the pairing place of the marriageable young people. In the villages young people, joking and laughing, can frequently be seen going about wrapped in one blanket and with their arms round each other. There is no secrecy about the wooing; it is carried on mainly in the *olag*. Marriage rarely takes place without previous intercourse, and seldom before the girl is pregnant. An exception to this rule only occurs when a rich man marries a girl against her will at the parents' wish. Not infrequently a young man has affairs with two or three girls at one and the same time. The girls quite openly and unmistakably invite the men to go with them into the *olag*. As soon as a girl becomes pregnant, she at once joyfully informs the father of the child, for these people are very fond of children. If the man refuses to marry the girl, there is likely to be tears, but no one is much concerned about the infidelity itself, because the girl can find a husband later on in spite of her having borne a child; indeed, the more so, as there can be no doubt of her fertility. It is not

customary for married men to enter the *olag*. A young man, however, can go there if his former love has remained single and welcomes him, because she still has hopes of becoming his wife, for it is easy to get a separation, and if a man can afford it, he may have two or three wives, though polygamy is rare. A man whose wife is pregnant does not visit the *olag*, for it is feared that this may bring about a premature birth and cause the death of the child. Married women apparently remain always faithful (A. E. Jenks, p. 66). Ferdinand Blumentritt makes a statement, based on Spanish information, that the girls' houses of the Igorotes serve the purpose of ensuring pre-marital purity. This, however, is incorrect.

Very similar customs prevail among the Naga tribes of Assam (Peal, pp. 244 *et seq.*).

The pure Senoi and Semang tribes of the Malay Peninsula practise strict monogamy. Marriage takes place at an early age, sometimes between boys of fourteen and girls of thirteen. Even betrothals of children seem to occur. Marital unfaithfulness is punished with death (Martin, 1905, p. 864).

In many districts of Australia, indeed, among the majority of the natives of the Australian continent, there exist two forms of sexual union side by side. The one form consists in a girl's being given in marriage to one man without regard to the difference in ages, and also without any consideration for feelings



of personal sympathy. Indeed, such is hardly possible, for the girls are given to the men at a very young age. The main cause of these unions is apparently economic. It ensures the man a housekeeper for himself who has to gather the largest share of provisions, for the result of the man's hunting yields only a very small part of the absolutely essential food. A man may have, according to his social position, one or more such housekeepers. In addition, each man and woman may form a union with one or more of the other sex merely for the purpose of sexual intercourse. Unlike the "marriages" previously mentioned, these unions do not take place without any formality—there is a special ceremony for the occasion. They do not last for life, at least among some of the tribes, but are regulated from time to time. This form of sexual union is generally called *pirauru* in ethnographical literature, after the designation in use among the tribes of the Dieri, where this kind of sex community was first observed. The men of a *pirauru* group are either consanguineous or collateral brothers, members of one and the same subdivision of the tribe; similarly, the women of a *pirauru* group are consanguineous or collateral sisters. Sexual intercourse with a *pirauru* wife is allowed during the absence of the husband who is her usual mate, and also at special festivals. When a man's housekeeper dies, her children are cared for by one of his *pirauru* wives until he gets another housekeeper. Without the institution of *pirauru*, the

younger men would be barred from sexual intercourse. Many of them are without housekeepers, as most of the young women are in the possession of the older influential men. It has been said that the old men are often killed by the young men on this account (Spencer, p. 11). The majority of the tribes that have the institution of *pirauru* are ignorant of the connection between sexual intercourse and conception (see Chapter VI.). It is therefore not the production of progeny which seems to be the purpose of a common household between man and woman, nor of the *pirauru* unions.

Institutions similar to the Australian *pirauru* also exist outside Australia. Codrington (p. 22) has established the fact that in the Solomon Islands and in other parts of Melanesia a woman of an exogamic group who is not yet married to one particular man may legitimately have sexual intercourse with all men of another exogamic group who are her potential husbands. The exogamic groups play a far more important rôle than individual marriage. In the Fijian Islands every man has the right to sexual intercourse with his wife's sisters. On special ceremonial occasions intercourse is permitted between those groups of men and women who stand in the relationship of possible conjugal partners (Thomson, p. 185).

Pre-marital sexual freedom of both sexes exists, or did exist, all over the South Sea islands before the advent of European influence. Thus, e.g., Robert W.



Williamson (pp. 172—176) writes of the Mafulus, in the mountains of New Guinea, that unmarried youths and maidens are allowed to associate with each other without any precautions. There exists a good deal of "immorality." Even after marriage (which takes place with an elaborate pretence of bride capture) husband and wife are, as a rule, not faithful to each other, the marriage bond being very loose. But it is said that unfaithfulness on the part of the women (though not of the men) is considered a great offence. The injured husband used to have the right of killing the guilty man, which he did, as a rule, until the British authorities put an end to the practice. Nowadays the deceived husband is generally satisfied if he receives a pig or some other article of value from the guilty rival.

In Africa sexual community is allowed at certain periods among the Hereros (Brinker, p. 88). Among many other Bantu tribes sexual communism is customary, particularly at the initiation of the young people. The girls, too, are allowed to choose male partners for a time, and among many tribes of South Africa it was customary for the girls who refused to be given to men against their will. The Colonial Government has now put a stop to this (Theal).

The statements about the Hottentots of South Africa vary. But the custom of *sore*, which is found among them, seems to point to the existence of an institution similar to the Australian *pirauru*. Schultze

(pp. 299, 319) thinks that illicit love was punished among the Hottentots before the extensive immigration of the white people into South Africa led to the overthrow of their old customs. Either the guilty couple were beaten, with the consent of the parents, or the lover received, in addition to his own, his sweetheart's share of punishment. But Schultze mentions also that the institution of *sore*, intended ostensibly for the exchange of love gifts, really means in many cases a secret agreement for intimate extra-marital relationship, though it is generally quite honourable. This institution is by no means an innovation.

The Hamitic tribes of East Africa, who belong to the most warlike races of mankind, permit pre-marital intercourse of both sexes. A. C. Hollis (1909, pp. 16, 77) says of the Nandi: "The unmarried warriors, as many as ten, sleep in the huts called *sigiroinet*, where the girls visit them and remain with them a few days, living with them in free love." Married women are not allowed to enter these huts. When the warriors go away for a time or go to war, their sweethearts keep the huts in order. Real "family life" is unknown, for the bigger boys and girls also live alone in special huts or together with the old women; the little boys who serve the warriors sleep in their houses. There is no publicly recognised punishment for adultery; but if a husband discovers another man not belonging to his *mat* (one of the subdivisions of each of the seven age classes) with his wife or one of his wives, he beats



him severely. Adultery is also not considered wrong when it concerns a couple that have previously lived together in free love in the warriors' house, even when the woman does not belong to a *mat* comrade. When a Nandi travels and wishes to remain somewhere overnight, he must first of all apply to another member of his *mat* in the place. If there is one, and both men are married, the latter gives hospitality to the guest, commissions his wife to fulfil his wishes, and leaves the hut in order to sleep elsewhere. The wife pours water over the hands of the guest, brings him a stool and food, puts his weapons into a place of safety, and spends the night with him. Should there be no member of his *mat* in the place, the traveller betakes himself to a member of the nearest *mat*; and, after having explained the situation, he is treated exactly as if both men belonged to the same *mat*. Members of different age classes do not offer each other hospitality or expect it. If the traveller is unmarried, he spends the night in the warriors' hut. Children born before marriage are killed by the Nandis, only one group making an exception to this rule.

The Masai have when travelling the same customs as the Nandis. Sexual intercourse with a girl or woman of the same age class is not considered wrong. A warrior marries the girl he makes pregnant. Children born before marriage are considered a disgrace. A person who has relations with a woman belonging to the paternal age class must beg pardon of the older

men and give as reparation two oxen or a commensurate quantity of honey wine. An old man who has sexual intercourse with his daughter or with another girl of her age is severely punished, if the affair comes to light : he is beaten, his kraal is pulled down, and his cattle are killed *ad libitum* (Hollis, 1905, pp. 287, 312, 313).

Of the conditions existing among the Baganda in East Africa the missionary John Roscoe (p. 10) gives us the following picture : “ Neither the men nor the women controlled their sexual cravings unless insurmountable obstacles came in the way. Women, however, could only attain their aims by stratagem. If an unmarried girl became pregnant, the guilty man had to pay a fine, and he was induced to marry the girl. If a husband discovered his wife with another man, he had the right to kill them both. Nevertheless the married women kept in strict seclusion used to receive lovers, which even the most dreadful punishments for adultery could not prevent.” It has to be noticed that the social formation of classes was already greatly developed among the Baganda at the time described by Roscoe. The wealthy men were in a position to have as many wives as they could support, so that there was a scarcity of women for the remaining men. It is not remarkable, therefore, that these tried to meet this fact by force and cunning. Although married women were secluded, single girls had a fair amount of liberty.



Among the Bushmen of South Africa, now nearly extinct, husband and wife remained faithful to each other for life. But if they became tired of each other, no hindrance was put in the way of separation and remarriage. A second husband, however, or a second wife was most probably never accepted into the family ; their passionate temperament was against it (Theal).

About the Indians of North-west Brazil Koch-Grünberg relates : “ Whilst young girls enjoy the greatest liberty, their purity not being necessarily above suspicion, marriage itself is generally on a higher plane ; a married couple are rarely unfaithful to each other.” Koch-Grünberg has never noticed even the semblance of indecent behaviour between married people, nor under normal circumstances any serious quarrels or ugly scenes. The same or similar conditions prevail nearly all over South America where European influence is not yet predominant. Karl von den Steinen (p. 501) mentions one exception to this rule. The Bororos, who live on the St. Lourenco river, and who were visited by him, have greatly degenerated, thanks to the civilising arts of the Brazilians. A marriage is concluded without any formality and without the consent of the parents. The young wife remains with her children in her parents’ house. The young husband only spends the night there ; during the day he lives in the men’s house when he is not hunting. The young couple have a hearth for themselves, the grand-

mother with the grandchildren sitting somewhat apart. Thus it remains up to the death of the grandparents. The grandmother suckles the child when the young wife accompanies her husband on the hunt or fetches palm nuts from the woods ; she still has milk when her children marry. Young unmarried men live together in special men's houses. They look out betimes for wives. There are two customs which deserve our interest. A girl's ear-lobes are bored by her future husband. If he himself does not marry her, his son does so. Furthermore, the man who puts the penis cuff on a boy becomes related to him and marries his sister or his aunt. Girls were taken to the men's house quite openly by day, or were caught at night. These girls were not married to one man ; any children born were fathered on those men with whom the girl had had relations. This state of affairs is the result of the overweening power wielded by the older men. The women are their possession, and a regular income of arrows and trinkets is earned by hiring out the girls to the men's house. Unnatural intercourse is not unknown in the men's house, but it occurs only when there is an exceptionally great scarcity of girls. According to a statement of a native, the same conditions prevail in the remote villages, where some only of the members of a tribe have permanent possession of the women. But such information given by the natives must be accepted with great caution. No similar customs have become known anywhere else in South America.



In North America the young people also had great liberty, but the married women dared not break their faith. Among many tribes, especially the nomadic hunting tribes, there existed patriarchal conditions, with complete subordination of the women. Intercourse with any one but their rightful husbands was taken in bad part. Nowadays the Indians of North America, with the exception of a small remnant living in the Canadian Tundra, have come under the influence of Christianity. The probable existence of an earlier sex communism among the North American Indians has been described in full by L. H. Morgan.

F. Nansen reports that among the Christian Eskimos of the west coast of Greenland the girls do not consider pre-marital motherhood as a disgrace. The green hair-band which the unmarried mothers have to wear is put on by them long before it is necessary. The young Greenland girls do not deem any concealment of their love affairs necessary. In East Greenland, which has not yet been reached by Christianity, it is customary for a man who wants a wife simply to abduct the girl from her house or tent. The abduction is often only a pretence, for the couple have settled it all between themselves. Formerly this form of marriage was in vogue all over Greenland. The relations look on quietly, for it is all a private affair of those immediately concerned. Should the girl really not wish to have the suitor, she will defend herself until she quietens down or the wooer renounces her. Divorce

also takes place without any difficulties ; but generally the marriage is continued if there is a child, particularly if it should be a boy. If a man covets the wife of another, he will take her without any hesitation, if he is the stronger. Among the non-Christian Eskimos most of the skilful hunters have two wives, but never more. The first wife is generally looked upon as the superior. Temporary exchange of wives occurs up to the present time even among the Christians on the west coast, especially when the people have to spend the summer hunting the reindeer in the interior of the country. As a rule, married people live on exceptionally good terms with each other.

Among the Netchili Eskimos near the Magnetic North Pole, however, conjugal harmony is, according to Roald Amundsen, not of the best. As a rule, the wife only escapes being beaten when she is stronger than the man. Exchange of women is quite common. Most of the girls are destined from birth for certain men, though sometimes things do not turn out as the parents wish it. When the girl is fourteen years old she seeks out her bridegroom, or he comes to her. There is no wedding. Amundsen doubts whether the couple have, as a rule, any tender feelings towards each other. The girl is just given to the man by the parents, the man marrying her in order to have one more domestic drudge, for in reality the wife is nothing more nor less than a domestic animal. Most Eskimos offer their wives to any one.



Among the Kamchadales, Chukchee, Jukagiers and Tunguses of North Asia the girls have pre-marital liberty, and there exists no marital fidelity. W. Bogoras (p. 602) describes "group marriage" among the Chukchee, which seems to be an institution similar to the Australian *pirauru*. There are groups, consisting of up to ten men or women, that have the right to sexual intercourse with each other; "but this right is comparatively rarely taken advantage of, only when a man has for some reason to visit the camp of one of his group companions. The host then gives up to him his place in the sleeping room, and if possible leaves the house for the night, going, for instance, to his flock. Afterwards the host generally seeks an opportunity of returning the visit, so as to exercise his rights in turn." The sex communities are generally composed of neighbours and friends. The offspring of brothers and sisters in the second and third generations are, as a rule, united in the same sex community, but not brothers. Bogoras thinks that the communities were originally limited to members of a group who were related, and were only later extended to other people; the ceremonies at the formation of a group seem to imply this. The persons concerned bring sacrifices and anoint themselves with blood, first in the one and then in the other camp. The admission into a group of persons who greatly diverge from each other in age is not welcomed, and single men are also not willingly admitted. The inhabitants of one and the same camp

are seldom willing to form a sex community, for reciprocal relationship is intended as an exception rather than the rule, though there are deviations from this rule. Every individual family of the Chukchee belongs in practice to some sex community. Should a family keep to themselves, it would indicate that they had no friends and no protectors in time of need. The children of members of a sex community are reckoned as near blood relations, and may not marry one another.

It is quite different among the Koryaks, the neighbours of the Chukchee. They demand abstinence from the girls before marriage, and there is rarely any transgression against this law. Pregnancy before marriage is a disgrace, and unmarried mothers are forced to give birth in the wilderness. Children born before marriage are killed. After the advent of puberty the girls sleep in their "combinations," which are fashioned in such a way as to exclude undesirable intercourse. Intercourse between engaged couples is also looked upon as sinful. Sometimes the girl lives with relatives in another place for a time, or is kept hidden until the bridegroom works off at her parents' home the service which he owes to them. Incest is strictly avoided, for it is feared that the evil-doers must die in consequence of it. The various prohibitions existing at the present day with regard to the marriage of certain consanguineous or adopted relations are only of recent date; they were unknown formerly (Jochelson, p. 733).



Perhaps the other existing sexual customs are also the result of missionary activities.

The above examples, chosen at random, plainly show that the conceptions of sexual morality generally held by primitive people are different from those prevalent under European civilisation. Very often these primitive customs have been greatly influenced or altogether exterminated by the example or the power of the European colonists. Whether this was of benefit to the races cannot be discussed here.

After all, European morality is not so very superior to that of the "savages." As Georg Friederici (p. 85) pertinently says: "Almost everywhere in our society we shut our eyes to the fact that our young men do what is forbidden to them, but is permitted to the Melanesian and Polynesian girls. We admit the State regulation of prostitution or, to avoid greater scandal, even street prostitution; yet we set out in moral indignation to reform the customs of primitive peoples which have proved their value and are consistent with their moral laws. Having nothing better to put in their place, we merely introduce among them what happens to be our own canker."

Everywhere the fight against the traditional moral ideals has resulted merely in the introduction of prostitution, with all its corruption. We should therefore refrain from reforms that are misplaced, and should not attack customs that cannot be replaced by better ones, and that do not stand in the way of colonisation.

### III

#### COURTSHIP CUSTOMS

VERY often we find among primitive people that marriage is preceded by a pretended bride capture, though the couple themselves and their relations have agreed to the union. This gave occasion to the belief that the capture of women was formerly a widespread and original form of marriage. The pretended capture does not, however, seem to imply the existence of true "marriage by capture," but rather seems to indicate the fact that formerly brides were often given to men against their will and had to be forced to go with them. The fact that often the abducting bridegroom is in fun beaten by the brothers or other male relations of the girl does not exclude this conclusion, for the thrashing may be a later embellishment of the game of abduction, its purpose being to increase the pleasure of the guests by satisfying their spectacular desire. It is worthy of note that in Assam among the matriarchal Garos there is a pretended capture of the bridegroom. It would be a mistake to conclude from this that formerly mother-rule actually existed among the Garos. In the report on the ethnographical survey of the Indian Central Provinces (V., p. 53) it is stated that it was



formerly customary among the Kulams to capture men for those of their girls who would otherwise have remained unmarried.

Among the peoples whose girls are married at a very young age no wooing is customary, as, *e.g.*, among the Dravidian Indians, the Australians, their near relations, and others. Marriage in these cases takes place without any or with very little ceremony (Jagor, Spencer, Howitt). It has been impossible so far in India to check the evil custom of child marriage ; on the contrary, it is becoming more prevalent among the animistic tribes.

Child engagements rather than child marriages are prevalent among many peoples, as among the Asiatic Polar races and the Eskimos of North America. But among most of these peoples free courtship exists. Thus Jochelson writes about the Koryaks in the extreme north-east of Asia : “ If a Koryak falls in love with a girl, he generally sends a match-maker to the father of the girl ; but this is not always the case, and particularly so if the parents do not agree to the son’s choice. Frequently the young man, without telling anybody of his intentions, goes to the girl’s home and does all the work there which is seemly for a man. The father-in-law accepts his services also in silence. If he is pleased with the bridegroom, he entrusts him with commissions ; otherwise he lets him feel that he must leave the house. The bridegroom’s service lasts from six months to three years. This service cannot

be conceived as 'payment' for the bride, for the wealthier of the Konaks could pay with reindeer instead of working off the price of the bride. Besides, the bride receives a dowry of reindeer, which is worth much more than the service given by the son-in-law. This service is only an empty formality, if the wooer is an older man. It rather seems as if the main purpose of the service is to put the bridegroom to the test, for it is not the actual work done that is of most importance, but the harsh treatment that he has to endure and the meagre and laborious life that he is forced to lead. The service comes to an end whenever the father-in-law decides. The man then leads his bride home without any formality, although she at first pretends to struggle against it; she gives up this pretence as soon as the man succeeds in touching her sex organs. Should a girl really not care for the man intended for her, she will attempt to escape in reality; but she is ultimately forced by her parents into marriage. Often, however, the girl's inclination is taken into consideration before she is given into marriage."

Among the inland tribes of Borneo young people get married as soon as they have reached maturity. The young man sends a confidential friend to the parents of the girl desired, who, as a matter of form, make objections and invent all manner of excuses. Only after the second or third visit of the go-between is the matter taken at all seriously and a decision arrived at.



If the parents agree, they receive from the go-between presents sent by the bridegroom, and the girl sends her lover strings of pearls. The time of the new moon is considered the best time for marriage. The wedding day is kept count of by both parties having strings with an equal number of knots, from which one knot is cut off each day. The marriage is celebrated with festivities, the bridegroom and guests appearing in war dress ; there is great feasting and much ceremony (Hose and McDougall, II., pp. 171 *et seq.*).

Among the Mafulu, a hill tribe of New Guinea, child engagements are frequent, but the courting of adults seems to predominate. R. W. Williamson writes (p. 170) that in one case known to him a girl of sixteen or seventeen years old was looked upon as married to the yet unborn son of a chief. When the boy died in early childhood, the girl was reckoned to be his widow. If a young Mafulu youth wishes to marry and does not know where to look for a bride, he will sometimes light a fire outside the village ; he will wait to see in which direction the next gust of wind will blow the smoke, and there he will turn to seek a wife. Often the youth carries about with him a bag with small pieces of wood and stone. He rubs a piece of tobacco between two pieces and sends it to the girl of his choice by one of her female relatives. He believes that by this procedure the girl's heart will be turned towards him through some mysterious power. The young men often obtain the necessary pieces of wood or stone

from a magician. The offer of marriage is also made through a third person, generally a woman. The consent of the parents is necessary ; the marriage takes place without any special ceremony.

Among the pigmy races of Asia and Africa child marriage exists side by side with adult courtship. Of the Negritos of Zambales (Philippine Islands) W. A. Reed (p. 56) says that the suitor has to pay a price for the bride. The parents try to bargain for as much as possible, and it is only when these demands have been fulfilled that the daughter has any choice in the matter. The young man who has found a suitable girl informs his family of the fact ; they decide how much the girl is worth and how much must be paid for her. Thereupon the suitor or a relative inquires of the girl's family whether they agree to the marriage. If they do, the purchase price is brought within a few days, and in case this proves satisfactory to the parents these give their consent. In many cases the girls are already in early youth promised to the boys chosen by the parents, but the children remain with their parents until maturity. Sometimes little girls are given to grown-up men, so that the difference in ages is great, and the girls very unwillingly obey their parents' will. When two families have daughters *and* sons the girls are exchanged as wives without either of the families paying a price. It is said that slaves and stolen strange children are given as payment for the bride. It is doubtful, however, according to W. A. Reed,



whether this still occurs. In many parts of the country the settlement of the price is followed by feasting and dancing, at which pretended capture of the bride plays a great *rôle*.

Among the Hamites of East Africa the custom exists of assigning girls still far from mature as wives to certain adult men. If, *e.g.*, a Masai wishes to marry, he courts a very young girl, whose father receives presents repeatedly. After the ritual operation is performed upon the girl the young man goes to live in the house of his father-in-law, bringing with him as gifts three cows and two oxen. When the time comes for taking the bride home, an additional present of three sheep is made. The girl puts on her bridal dress and follows the man without further ceremony. A man who possesses a big herd of cattle can have many wives, some rich men having as many as ten or twenty wives (Hollis, 1905, pp. 302, 303).

Among the negroes adult people have the right to choose their mates, though choice is restricted through various traditional considerations. Child engagements are not uncommon. Thus among the Bantus it is even to-day often customary to assign children at an early age to each other for marriage. Weule (p. 58) says of the Jaos in East Africa: "It is a general custom for a woman who has just given birth to a child to say to a pregnant neighbour: 'I have a daughter' (or 'a son'); 'if your child proves to be a son' (or 'a daughter'), 'they shall marry each other.' The other generally agrees,

and this arrangement is adhered to later. For adults there exist no special rules in the choice of mates nowadays, and it is doubtful whether such existed previously. If a serf wants to marry, he tells his father, who informs the master. The latter then speaks with the father of the chosen girl. If the father agrees, the daughter is brought in and asked for her opinion. If she is not willing to marry the suitor, the affair is at an end. If she agrees, the relatives, with the master at the head, consult together, and the decision is then made. Among the Mokondes in the north of the Rowuma river the young man looking out for marriage lets his parents negotiate with the girl's parents. If they come to an agreement, the bridegroom gives the bride's parents a present, which makes the affair binding. Among the more conservative classes the eldest brother of the girl's mother also has a voice in the matter, getting a share of the bridegroom's presents. In olden times a Makonde boy lived after his circumcision with one of his maternal uncles, into whose family he afterwards married. If there were no girls in the family, he waited for a cousin. The young man had to do all the work at his uncle's house until the daughter grew up. Among the Makuas the suitor himself goes to the girl's father, who again must get the consent of the mother's eldest brother. Often all the brothers, instead of one, must be consulted. The suitor goes the next day for his answer. If the answer is 'Yes,' the time for the wedding is appointed,



at which well-meant speeches are made, and advice is given to the bridal pair. As a rule, the couple are more or less of the same age, but it sometimes happens that young girls are married by men much older than themselves."

Of the Hottentots Schultze (p. 297) writes: "A man who wishes to get a confession of love from the girl of his choice gives her a little piece of wood. If the two have come to an agreement, they break it, each holding at one end, and then they throw the broken pieces at each other's chest. The couple then commence courting, during which time they are not allowed to speak a word with each other or to reach each other anything. An intermediary acts between them for this purpose. Transgressions have to be expiated by presents. It is all an amorous game of hide-and-seek, which has hardened into a rigid custom. It can continue thus for months or for a year, and longer, before the affair ripens. This can happen in two ways: either openly by the parents' consent being asked, or secretly by means of a symbolic action which expresses the girl's agreement to complete surrender. The young man draws off one of his skin shoes and throws it to the girl in private. If she disregards the shoe, the proposal for an early union is rejected; in the contrary case she gives the shoe back. When the wedding is to come off, the parents negotiate with each other for some time, but more in pretence than real earnest. When an agreement

has been reached, the marriage is celebrated with feasting."

Among the Indians marriage is entered into by free courtship, though girls in particular, just as with us, are greatly dependent upon the will of their parents. The girls marry sometimes at a very early age, but marriage before maturity seems non-existent.

Koch-Grünberg (I., pp. 181, 182) says of the Siusis that the choice of partners is not always the affair of those directly concerned. Often the parents, or the father alone, choose the husband for the daughter. The parents have no such strong influence on the son's choice. The wedding is celebrated by dancing, which goes on for several days at the house of the bride's father. At the end of the festivities the latter makes a long speech to his son-in-law, and gives him over his daughter as wife, wherewith the marriage is consummated. The young wife goes to her husband's house, which, as a rule, also serves as the home of her parents-in-law. The trousseau is generally small.

Among the Kobeua Indians of the Upper Rio Negro a young man wishing to marry asks the permission of the father of his bride-elect. If he consents, the bridegroom remains for five days in the house of his parents-in-law, and a big dance and banquet is held, in which many guests take part. At the end of the feast the father gives over his daughter to his son-in-law, whereupon the couple go off, the father



breaking out into a ceremonial lament. Amongst some races capture of women is said to be still customary. In any case the wife has to be from another tribe. Evidence of woman capture is still to be found in the tradition of the tribe (Koch-Grünberg, II., pp. 144, 145).

The Bakairis have no wedding celebrations. The marriage is discussed by the parents. If they come to an agreement, the bride's father receives some trifles as a present. The bridegroom hangs up his hammock above that of the girl, and everything is settled. It is only where the tribe has fallen into decay that great differences in the ages of the married people occur, and that older men in particular have the privilege of possessing young wives (compare Chapter II.). Divorce can be got without difficulty, even when the man is unwilling.

Among the Paressis the marriage is arranged by the parents on both sides, and the bride, after having received a few presents, is led by her parents without any formality to her bridegroom's hammock (von den Steinen, pp. 331, 434).

The custom of paying a price for the bride, prevalent among many races all over the world, is frequently spoken of as marriage by purchase. The price is very varied, and its value very unequal, but as a rule it is relatively small, and not infrequently it is so small as to have no economic value for the parents-in-law. Among the animistic tribes of British India, who, as a

rule, pay a price for the bride, the sum may be as much as 200 rupees. Generally more is paid for a virgin than for a widow ; but there are some Indian castes of manual labourers among whom the woman takes a share in the industrial work, and among whom the reverse is the case. It sometimes happens that the price is adjusted according to the age of the bride. Often brides are exchanged between two families, so that the payment of a price is dispensed with. "Marriage by service" still persists in various places, especially in Asia. Here the future son-in-law, instead of paying a price for the bride, has to work a certain number of years for the father of the bride. Among most primitive people the woman represents labour power in the house, as the men, either wholly or to a large extent, occupy themselves with social concerns (E. Hahn). Domestic prosperity depends wholly on the women's work. Thus it can easily be seen how the custom came about of demanding some service from the man who wanted a wife. Real purchase of a wife occurs only exceptionally among primitive people. It is never the rule, nor is the woman a real object of barter. If actual sale of women occurs in some cases, it is only an exception. Such cases are only frequent where the influence of Islam is most pronounced.

The bride price is wholly or partly paid back should the wife run away, or even if she meets with an early death. If there are sisters, the forsaken husband or widower may sometimes forego the restitution of



the price paid and accept one of the sisters as his wife.

In India a price for the bridegroom is paid, not only among the upper castes of the civilised races, but also occasionally among the lower castes and among the primitive natives.

## IV

### MARRIAGE

By far the greatest number of primitive peoples are monogamous. Only in relatively few cases is there polyandry. Polygyny often occurs among persons who are specially favoured, either economically or socially ; but it is nowhere the form of marriage of the majority of the population. The polygyny reported among certain tribes generally refers only to chiefs, magic doctors, or some other special persons who have more than one wife. Sexual group communism at the side of monogamy or polyandry has been found in various places, but it is wrong to speak of it as "group marriage." This is evident from the previously quoted examples of the *pirauru* in Australia, the sex communities among the Chukchee, the Nandi, Masai, and others. It is possible, of course, that monogamy which now co-exists with certain cases of sex communism may have been a later addition, but this is not proven. It is more likely that the pairing instinct (not identical with the instinct of procreation) is characteristic of our sub-human ancestors. In fact, even in the animal world there are numerous examples of monogamy (P. Deegener).

It has been established that in Africa, Indonesia,



Melanesia, and elsewhere, the small children remain with their parents, while the bigger children are lodged together in special boys' and girls' houses, and are, as it were, brought up communally. The relationship of the children to their own parents is not notably closer than that between them and other persons of the same age class. We must not look upon this child communism solely as a curiosity, but as the relic of a very ancient primitive institution. Most likely there is some connection between child communism and the interchange of children which is customary, for example, among the Dravidian races of India ("Ethnographical Survey of the Central India Agency") and on the Murray Islands, in the Torres Straits (Australia). According to W. H. R. Rivers (1907, p. 318), the interchange of children between families is very frequent here without the peoples being able to give any explanation of it. Nor do other social and religious institutions offer any indication as to the origin of this custom. Rivers surmises that it has been preserved from a social organisation in which "children were largely common to the women of the group so far as nurture was concerned." At any rate, this adoption *en masse* will help civilised man to understand that less civilised peoples have ideas about parenthood different from those that exist among us, and also that group motherhood is not absurd. The existence of group motherhood among primitive communities—whose members were much more dependent on each other in the struggle for

existence than are the members of much more advanced societies—must often have been of considerable advantage to these communities. On the assumption of “group motherhood” it is easily explainable that children use the same mode of address for their own sisters and brothers as for all the other children of the group, and that all the women of equal ages are called “mother.” Hence the classificatory system of relationship ceases to be puzzling. It becomes clear why under this system whole groups of persons designate each other as husbands and wives, and why the children of all the persons of these groups call each other brothers and sisters, etc. The assumption is justified that man in a low state of civilisation knew only group relationship; further distinctions were derived only later from these relationships, the present-day classificatory system arising ultimately from them. Among the peoples where Rivers could examine this system there were indications of a development in the direction of using it rather for the distinction of real blood and marriage relationship than for the distinction of social position, for which it was originally intended. A connection between marriage regulation and the classificatory system of relationships exists not only among the Dravidian races, but also among the North American Indians, and certainly among other branches of the human race. Rivers says: “The classificatory system in one form or another is spread so widely over the world as to make it probable that



it had its origin in some universal stage of social development " ; and further he says : " The kind of society which most readily accounts for its chief features is one characterised by a form of marriage in which definite groups of men are the husbands of definite groups of women." Rivers does not mean thereby institutions like the *pirauru*, but a permanent group marriage. It may be objected against this latter assumption that permanent (not occasional) sex communism does not necessarily need to be connected with communism of children. It is quite possible that monogamy and child communism may exist side by side, as, *e.g.*, among the Murray Islanders.

But even if group marriage did really exist in some places, and if the existence of child communism would prove this, it still cannot be asserted that it is a phase of development through which all human races have passed. For the assumption of a parallel development of all races is untenable. It is true the basic psychic organisation is the same for all human beings, being due to the common descent of mankind. But owing to the continual adaptation to changing environmental conditions, it was not preserved, but underwent different changes. There is no ground for the assumption that, while environmental changes brought about bodily modifications, mental changes did not take place also, therewith leading at the same time to differences in social culture. On the contrary, we must rather assume that together with anthropological variations

among the races there also arose variations in social development, the different civilisations resulting from differentiated mental dispositions and deviating more and more from each other. Certain elements of the original primitive civilisation have been preserved in the various later developments, but not everywhere the same elements, nor were the differentiations that did take place all of the same degree. Certain fundamental conceptions may remain unchanged for long periods, and may produce analogous phenomena in different civilisations. Since deviations from monogamy are extremely rare among primitive peoples, the assumption is justified that monogamy is one of the fundamental factors of human civilisation. How could its practically universal occurrence be explained otherwise? There can be no question of convergence, nor has a world-wide transmission of a cultural element that has arisen later been proved up to the present.

The opinion, first expressed by L. H. Morgan, that the classificatory relationship system is evidence of the existence of group marriage (not merely in the form of *pirauru* existing at the side of monogamy), is contradicted by the etymological meaning of the terms used by primitive people, which are generally translated by "father," "mother," "grandfather," "brother," "sister," "child," etc. These collective names show nowhere an allusion to procreation, but only to age differences: father and mother are the "elder," the "big ones," the "grown-ups"; the children are the "little ones," the "young



ones"; brothers and sisters are the "comrades." We often find that among the Australian negroes and the South Sea islanders no distinction is made between father and mother. All persons of an older generation of a horde or a totem (or of a phratry respectively) are simply the "elder," the "big ones." If a native wishes to indicate more clearly the sex of a person of an older class, he must add the word "man" or "woman" (or the adjective "male" or "female"). It often happens that grandparents and grandchildren use the same form of address, which in no way refers to descent (Cunow). Other facts point to the same conclusion. Where the *pirauru* exists in Australia, the same form of address is used for persons standing in *pirauru* relationship to the speaker as for members of the same age class who have no such relationship. This could not be so if the appellation had originated from common sexual relationship. Cunow rightly concludes: "Sexual communities can be proved to exist here and there among primitive peoples, but the nomenclature of the classificatory relationships has not grown out of such group relationships. These so-called group marriages are rather adventitious growths, playing only a secondary rôle in the history of the family."

Buschan (1912, p. 254) looks upon the pre-marital sexual freedom of girls among many primitive peoples (most probably among the majority of them) as a relic of communal marriage from earlier times. He

assumes that the girls had promiscuous relationships with the other sex. This, however, is not the case. As a rule, couples meet together for a time, and only rarely does a person have relationship with several persons at the same time. The conditions are essentially the same as in Europe, except that amongst "savages" a love affair going as far as intercourse is not considered immoral. The assumption of many authors that man is polygynous is far from being proved, at least not in the sense that the majority of men are inclined to have relationship with several women at the same time. It cannot, however, be disputed that after some time the relationship between two people tends to lose its attraction, often causing a breaking of the marriage vow.

There is a custom among many peoples that a man's widow falls to his younger brother (or cousin)—the *levirate*. According to another custom, a man has the right to marry the sisters of his wife. Both these customs have been explained as being relics of a form of marriage in which brothers married several sisters or sisters married brothers at the same time (Frazer, II., p. 144). But it seems much more likely that we have here before us merely a case of property rights.

Even if constancy in marriage is not the rule, especially among primitive people, yet we must still regard the permanent living together of one man and one woman as a state that has always prevailed amongst



human beings (Westermarck). Many of the speculations, at first sight so learned, about the apparently intricate paths in the development of marriage, remain merely speculations which cannot stand the test of modern ethnological research. Heinrich Schurtz (p. 175) makes the pertinent remark that nothing excited the hostile camps of the sociological idealists and naturalists more than the dispute about promiscuity in primitive times. While the one party painted with zest the indiscriminate and irregular sex relationship of primitive races, claiming it as an established original stage in human development, the adherents of idealism rose in indignation against a theory that places primitive man far below the level of the higher animals, and that leaves the riddle unsolved how such a chaos could lead to the idea of sexual purity and a spiritualisation of the sexual impulse. In this battle for and against promiscuity even facts were unfortunately too often not respected, attempts being made to disregard them at any cost. This cannot be good for the ultimate victory of truth. Facts should not be passed over, but should be taken into full consideration. In this conflict of opinions the institution of *pirauru* especially has fared particularly badly. Some anthropologists wanted to do away with it altogether at any price (for instance, Josef Müller) ; others drew conclusions from it that are utterly unjustified. But even if this were not so, even if the *pirauru* could be used as a proof of previous sexual promiscuity, it still does not follow

that it was a general custom in man, for the majority of the peoples show no trace of it.

First of all, it must be noticed that even the *pirauru* possesses various restrictions upon marriage with persons outside certain groups, which alone exclude unrestrained promiscuity. Furthermore, individual marriage, the binding force of which is undoubtedly even stronger and closer, is well known to exist beside it. There is a good deal of probability for the assumption of Schurtz that marriage regulations establishing the right of several men to one wife may first have arisen from mere friendly acts, or the original sexual licentiousness may have developed occasionally under specially favourable circumstances into the institution of *pirauru*, while at other places such a systematic development did not take place. It is easily to be understood that lower civilisations will show a looser standard of the marriage bond than those where many interests of a rich cultural development require the strengthening of this bond. Sexual needs may also have brought about the origin of the *pirauru* institutions. Thus there exist in Australia tribes among which the loan of wives was customary owing to the scarcity of women. There is only one step from this state of affairs to the *pirauru*. Among many tribes complicated marriage restrictions make a "legitimate" marriage very difficult, and this may easily lead to other sex relationships taking the place of marriage.

It is a mistake to assume hastily that customs



among primitive people that appear strange to us must therefore be ancient and be relics of a primitive state. Every primitive race has a long history behind it, and it is not likely that it has remained static all the time. Primitive people are not stationary in development; there is much change among them in the course of generations. This applies also to customs and habits which seem absolutely stable. External conditions may produce new developments, or result in foreign influences. Not everything, therefore, that is peculiar to uncivilised races of the present day must be look upon as primitive.

Polyandry deserves our special consideration. As a recognised social institution it has so far been definitely established only among the Indian peoples and castes, as well as in Tibet, on the borders of Northern India. In exceptional cases polyandry occurs among the Eskimos and the Asiatic Polar races. The older accounts of polyandry occurring in Australia are not confirmed by the new ethnographical literature. The reports about polyandry among the American Indians are also incorrect. John Roscoe (1907, pp. 99 *et seq.*) has proved its existence among the Bahima and Baziba tribes of Central Africa, though here polyandry is not the rule, but is only practised occasionally. If a man is poor, if he cannot get together the number of cows required for the bride price, or if he is unable to support a wife, he can combine with one or several of his brothers and take a wife in common with them. It is easy to

get the women for this purpose. Furthermore, among these tribes the housewife may be claimed by a guest, while exchange of wives also occurs.

In India polyandry is prevalent among the peoples of the Himalayan mountains and among some Southern Indian tribes. Some cases of this curious form of marriage are already mentioned in the ancient Indian literature. It may be assumed, therefore, that it was more prevalent formerly than at present. This institution was certainly never very general nor of great importance in the life of the people of India. At the present time it is restricted to a number of comparatively small tribes and castes. Two forms of polyandry can be distinguished among them, namely, the fraternal form, where several brothers or cousins have one wife in common, and the matriarchal form, where a woman has several husbands, not necessarily related to each other.

In Northern India polyandry is general among the Tibetans and Bhotias of the Himalayan border districts. Here, when the oldest of several brothers takes a wife, she has the right—but not the duty—to have sexual relationship with the other brothers living in the same household. If a younger brother also marries, the other still younger brothers have the choice in which household they wish to live. The surplus women become nuns. This system is said to be due to the poverty of the country. The Himalayan peoples, being intent on preventing the increase of the popula-



tion and a further reduction of the means of existence, consign many women to celibacy and childlessness. Yet at the same time they make it possible, by this system, for the socially privileged man to satisfy his sexual needs. The children of polyandrous marriages belong, as a rule, legally to the oldest brother. But it also occurs that each brother in turn, according to his age, has a child assigned to him regardless of whether the brother concerned was on the spot at the time of the child's conception. Sometimes the mother has the right to name the father of each of her children.

Fraternal polyandry also exists in Cashmir and among certain Sudra castes of the Punjab mountains. In the Punjab, however, the Rajputs and other castes of that neighbourhood are also influenced by polyandry. The ceremonies which take place at marriage in the Punjab bear traces of "marriage by capture." The dwellings of the polyandrous castes of this district consist of two rooms, one for the woman and one for the group of brothers. In Tibet, as also among the polyandrous Southern Indians, they have, however, mostly one room. The surplus women in the Punjab become objects of commerce. In the native State of Bashar, for instance, an active export trade is carried on with the surplus women, for whom sums up to 500 rupees are given.

Among the Dyats in the Punjab, the Gudyars in the United Provinces, as among all the Hindu castes in the

mountain districts of Ambala, polyandry existed until lately; but it is said not to do so there any longer. In Ambala not only brothers, but also first cousins, were considered to be husbands of the oldest brother's wife.

Further, in East India the Santal caste (2,138,000 persons in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa) is the only community among which a similar custom exists. Among the Santals not only have the younger brothers access to the wife of the older brother, but the husband also may have relations with the younger sisters of his wife. This state of affairs may perhaps be looked upon as sexual communism among a small group. In Ladakh, too, and in other places of Cashmir, the wife common to several brothers may bring with her her sister into the marriage as co-partner. In the Punjab the fraternal husbands may also marry a second and third wife.

Among Indian migratory labourers it seems to have been formerly the rule that the brother remaining at home served as a conjugal substitute for the husband temporarily absent. Nowadays this custom has almost disappeared.

In Southern India polyandry is a recognised institution among the Toda and Kurumba of the Nilgiri mountains; as also among a number of the lower castes, especially on the coast of Malabar. Here polyandry and polygyny occasionally co-exist side by side.



The polyandry among the Toda has been described in detail by W. H. R. Rivers. The whole tribe is divided into two endogamous groups, which, again, are split up into a number of exogamous sub-groups. The husbands shared in common by a woman are in most cases brothers ; they are rarely other members of the same exogamous group and of the same age class. When the husbands are brothers, there never ensue any quarrels about access to the wife. All the brothers are reckoned as fathers of a child. Yet it often occurs that a Toda only calls one man his father. It is exclusively external circumstances that are here decisive ; often one of the fathers is more influential and more respected than his brothers, and naturally the sons prefer to speak of him as their father. If only one of the fathers is alive, the offspring always describe him as their father. If the husbands are not real brothers, they live, like these, in one household, but the children are allotted to single definite fathers. That man is considered the father of a child who in the seventh month of the mother's pregnancy has gone with her through the ceremony of the presentation of bow and arrow (which is also customary in fraternal polyandry). The husbands may take turns in the practice of this ceremony at every pregnancy ; it results, therefore, frequently that the first two or three children belong to one and the same man, the other husbands acquiring formal father-right only at the later births. If the husbands separate and give up

the common household, each one takes with him the children belonging to him by right of the bow-and-arrow ceremony. As everywhere else in India, polyandry has fallen into decay among the Toda. It may happen that several men have in common several wives, or that of a group of brothers each has his own wife. But polyandry has remained up to the present time the prevalent form of marriage among these hill-folk. The surplus girls used formerly to be killed without exception; and it is certain, says Rivers, that girl infanticide is still practised to some extent, although the Toda themselves deny this. It must be noted that child marriage exists among the Toda.

Matriarchal polyandry, which, in contradistinction to fraternal polyandry, goes with descent through the mother, still occurs among the Munduvars of the Travancore plateaus, the Nayars in some parts of Travancore and Cochin, the Western Kallan, and also among some other Southern Indian communities. Among numerous other races having mother descent, but not among all, relics of the former existence of matriarchal polyandry have been established. The secular authorities, and no less the European missions, are trying hard to exterminate this form of marriage.

It is difficult to trace any connection between the polyandry in the north and that in the south of India. It is most probable that this custom was carried into Southern India by the Tibetan conquerors in ancient times. Many Southern Indian polyandrous races,



like the Toda and the Nayar, are distinguished from their real Dravidian neighbours by their more powerful build, lighter colouring, higher noses, etc. Furthermore, the architecture of the Malabar temples bears traces of Tibetan influence. The demon masks carved thereon show almost the same faces as the Tibetan masks. Among the Kallan the tradition of northern descent has been preserved up to the present time, and they bury their dead with their faces turned towards the north.

Exogamy is the custom which forbids the choice of partners for marriage within a certain group, and which has the effect of preventing near relations from sexual intercourse. It is found very frequently among primitive people, and is very prevalent, as Sir J. G. Frazer shows in his book "Totemism and Exogamy." This, however, does in no way justify the assumption that it was a general stage of civilisation of all mankind, and that it once existed even in those places where it is not found to-day.

Although European travellers, colonists and scientists had long been in contact with coloured races, it was the Scotsman J. F. McLennan who first discovered the existence of exogamy. He was led to this discovery by the study of that peculiar marriage custom which consists in the pretence of forcible bride capture, though the marriage of the couple concerned has been agreed to by both families beforehand. McLennan

tried to find an explanation for this custom, and came to the conclusion that capture of women, which only took place in pretence, must once have been practised in reality to a large extent. In searching for facts confirmatory of this assumption, he was struck by the fact that among savage and barbarous people the men married women not of their own, but of another, tribal group. He described this as "exogamy," in contradistinction to "endogamy," by which marriage partners are restricted in their choice to their own group. In a tribe or other social group both sexual arrangements may exist side by side, in such a manner that the tribe is closely endogamous and is divided into several exogamous groups.

The theory put forward by McLennan as an explanation of the origin of exogamy is very simple and on superficial examination very convincing. He assumed that exogamy arose from a scarcity of women, which forced men to obtain wives by capture from other groups and thus gradually led to a general preference for strange women. The cause of this assumed scarcity of women was considered to be the infanticide of newborn females, which was carried on systematically, for savage people foresaw that in the struggle for existence it would be a hindrance to have a great number of women, who could take no share in the battle with enemies, and who presumably would contribute less to the food supply than the men.

H. Cunow also traces back the origin of exogamy



to the scarcity of women and wife capture. He starts from the assumption that among the Australian and other uncivilised races the number of persons in a horde is very limited. "If one assumes that the number of members of a horde is sixty, the youngest class would contain, according to present-day reckoning, about twenty-five persons, the middle class twenty, and the oldest class about fifteen persons. In the middle class there would, therefore, be only about ten women. Among these a young man entering the middle class would often not find a single woman that he could take for his wife, for, after pairing marriage had become general, the few existing women had already found a spouse; they had already been disposed of. There was nothing left for the young man but to capture a woman from a strange horde as soon as possible, or to try to persuade a comrade of the same age class to let him share in his marriage relationship on the understanding that his hunting bag would contribute towards the 'household of the three.' This multiple conjugal partnership is customary among most of the Australian tribes even to-day." To this it must be added that the man needs to show much less consideration for a captured strange woman than for one of his own tribe, who would run away if badly treated. Nor can the young man remain single, for he himself would then have to drag his property about, which would hinder him in the hunt and expose him to the ridicule of his companions. (In reality there

are many unmarried men even in Australia.) The search for wives led ultimately, according to Cunow, to wife capture and exogamy.

Infanticide, which McLennan assumes, is at present a rare exception among primitive people. Almost all explorers praise their great love for children, and even malformed children are not always killed. Even where infanticide does occur, the sex of the child is certainly not the factor that decides whether it is to be killed or not. The assumption that scarcity of women is brought about by girl infanticide is not correct. The female sex is, indeed, in the minority among uncivilised natives where they have been counted ; but the excess of men is only small. Mutual capture of women could not alter this disparity, for it is unlikely that some tribes permitted the capture of their women without retaliation. Besides, even among primitive people men are careful in risking their lives. Capture of women is, therefore, nowhere the rule, but is everywhere the exception. Had it been the rule anywhere, the continuous fighting would have led to the extermination of the tribes in question. Frazer is right when he says : " If women are scarce in a group, many men will prefer to remain single rather than expose themselves to the danger of death by trying to capture women from their neighbours." This is what really happened among many tribes of the Australian natives who lived on a friendly footing with each other. It even happens that the old men who claim the women



expressly forbid the young men to steal women from other tribes, because that will lead to bloodshed. Further, scarcity of women is most likely overcome, as previously mentioned, by several men's sharing one wife, which arrangement, unlike the capture of women, avoids arousing the hostility of neighbours. Among peaceable tribes, therefore, a numerical preponderance of men results not in exogamy, but in polyandry. But admitting that a warlike tribe has not sufficient women and therefore captures them from their neighbours, it is still unexplainable why the men should altogether avoid sexual relationship with their own women, few as they are, and have no desire for them whatsoever. This will certainly not be the result ; on the contrary, the few women obtainable without force will be all the more in demand.

Frazer thinks that the origin of exogamy has been rightly explained by the American ethnologist L. H. Morgan, who for many years lived among the exogamic Indians as one of them, and thus came into direct contact with exogamy. Morgan assumed that sexual promiscuity was general at a very early period in the history of mankind, and that exogamy was instituted for the deliberate purpose of preventing cohabitation between blood relations, particularly between brothers and sisters, as was previously customary. This struck promiscuity at the root ; it removed its worst peculiarity, and resulted at the same time in a powerful movement towards the establishment of sexual monogamy.

Frazer, in supporting Morgan's theory, relies exclusively on the Australian natives, who, according to him, though extremely primitive savages, "carry out the principle of exogamy with a practical astuteness, logical thoroughness, and precision such as no other race shows in its marriage system."

Frazer finds that the effects of the Australian marriage class system are in complete harmony with the deeply rooted convictions and feelings of the natives as regards sexual intercourse, and concludes that the successive tribal subdivisions have been brought about deliberately in order to avoid marriage of blood relations. According to him, it is not going too far to assert that "no other human institution bears the stamp of deliberate purpose more clearly than the exogamous classes of the Australians. To assume that they serve only accidentally the purpose that they actually fulfil, and which is approved by them unreservedly, would be to test our credulity nearly as much as if we were told that the complicated mechanism of a watch has originated without human design."

Nearly all Australian tribes have the system of division into marriage classes. Every tribe consists of two main groups (called in ethnographical literature phratries or moieties), and each of these groups is again divided into two, four, or eight classes. Sometimes the phratries and classes have special names, but not always. In the latter case it may be assumed that the names have been lost, while the division of the



tribes into marriage groups remains. These groups are strictly exogamous. In no case are the members of the main group of the tribe (phratry) or of the same class allowed to marry each other. Only members of two given classes may marry, and their children are again assigned to given classes. Among some of the tribes there exists paternal descent, among others maternal descent. Which of the two modes of descent prevails in Australia can hardly be determined. Among some tribes property is inherited in the female line. Other rights of the female sex connected with mother descent are unknown. An example of the Australian marriage classes is given here, namely, that of the tribe Warrai, who live on the railway line running from Port Darwin to the south. Among this tribe indirect paternal descent is the custom; *i.e.*, the children belong to the main group (phratry) of the father, but to other marriage classes.

Phratry I.	Phratry II.
Adshumbitch *Aldshambitch	Apungerti *Alpungerti
Apularan *Alpularan	Auinmitch *Alinmitch

The female marriage classes are marked with an asterisk.

Each member of a certain male marriage class may

only marry a member of a marriage class of the other phratry, placed opposite in the table. Thus, for instance, an Adshumbitch man marries an Alpungerti woman, an Apungerti man an Aldshambitch woman, etc. The children always belong to the phratry of the men, but to another marriage group of theirs. Thus, for instance, the boys born from the union of an Adshumbitch man with an Apungerti woman belong to the Apularan class, and the girls born of this marriage belong to the Alpularan class. Further complications arise in consequence of the totem system, which exists among most of the Australian tribes. As the local groups of a tribe are numerically weak and consist of members of all marriage classes, the choice of mates is restricted to quite a small number of persons, being further limited to a great extent by the marriage of girls in childhood. But even when adults marry, they can rarely decide according to their own will, but are dependent on the circumstances of relationship. On the northern coast of Australia the marriage class system does not exist, but exogamy exists there, the members of certain local groups not being allowed to marry each other. The now extinct tribes in the south-east of the continent also had no marriage class system.

But it still remains a mystery how it was found out that marriages of blood relations were harmful. One objection is, that some of the Australians are ignorant of the process of generation ; they do not even know that pregnancy is the result of cohabitation. It is also



doubtful whether the Australian natives can in any case be considered as typical representatives of primitive man. If this were so, all mankind would still be in a very low state of civilisation, for the Australians appear incapable of progressive development. And further, if exogamous classes were purposely instituted in order to prevent cohabitation between blood relations, how is it that other people also are excluded from sexual intercourse who are not blood relations? Frazer's comparison with a watch is also badly chosen. We must take into consideration the intellectual stage of development of mankind at the time when exogamy arose, and when the watch was invented. Even if we do not admit that exogamy was instituted with a conscious purpose, this does not by any means, as Frazer says, do away altogether with will and purpose from the history of human institutions. There is no need to doubt that the Australian system of exogamy became more and more complicated through the deliberate action of man.

Frazer himself assumes that the Australians had an aversion to cohabitation between brothers and sisters even before it was definitely fixed by binding rules. Sexual aversion between parents and children, according to him, is universal among them, whether there be in vogue the two-, four- or eight-classes system, *i.e.*, whether incest between parents and children is expressly forbidden or not. "In democratic societies like those of the Australian natives, the law sanctions only thoughts that have

already been long the mental possession of the majority of people." Hence the agreement of the marriage class system with the feelings of the people becomes explainable.

Since the aversion to sexual intercourse within certain classes was already in existence before the formation of marriage classes, the classificatory system being merely the formal expression of it, we have to find some explanation for it. For the appearance of this aversion marks the real beginning of exogamy, which cannot be explained by the complicated system of the Australians. It is possible that the sexual aversion towards blood relations is already a characteristic trait of the human race before its truly human development, and that it may have to be looked upon as an instinct. This is the opinion of F. Hellwald, which has also been upheld of late by A. E. Crawley. It is assumed that among brothers and sisters, as among boys and girls who have lived together from childhood, the pairing instinct generally remains in abeyance, because the conditions are wanting that are likely to awaken this instinct. Courting the favour of a person of the other sex is the process that gradually brings about the sexual excitement necessary for union. The possibility of sexual excitation between people who have lived together from childhood is decidedly lessened through habituation, if not completely inhibited. In this respect brothers and sisters reach already at puberty that state towards each other to which people married for a long time approach



gradually, through the constant living together and the exhaustion of youthful passion. If brother and sister sometimes show passion for each other, it is generally the result of the same circumstances that are necessary to arouse it under normal conditions, *e.g.*, a long separation. As the absence of sexual attraction between brother and sister who have grown up together is a natural thing, it is strange that cohabitation between them should have to be specially prohibited and enforced by strict measures among primitive peoples. The explanation, according to Crawley, is simple. "In many departments of primitive life we find a naïve desire to, as it were, assist Nature, to affirm what is normal and later to confirm it by the categorical imperative of custom and law. This tendency still flourishes in our civilised communities, and, as the worship of the normal, is often a deadly foe to the abnormal and eccentric, and too often paralyses originality. Laws thus made, and with this object, have some justification, and their existence may be due, in some small measure, to the fact that abnormality increases *pari passu* with culture. But it is a grave error to ascribe a prevalence of incest to the period preceding the law against it." All the facts tend to show that the most primitive people procured their wives by friendly arrangements. From this standpoint it would be most practical if each tribe were divided into two groups, the men of each group marrying wives from the other group. This state of

affairs is actually to be found among many uncivilised peoples that are divided into two exogamous groups or phratries. It has still to be discovered how this bipartition arose. It is unthinkable that a division into two groups was intentionally brought about by the members of the groups for the purpose of preventing marriages between blood relations of a certain grade. No tribe has ever been divided in such a manner ; the division must therefore be explainable in another way. The phratries are large families (in the broad sense of the word); they descend from families (in the narrower sense of the word), reciprocally supplying each other with wives. The names of the phratries are generally unintelligible, in contradistinction to the names of the totem groups, and therefore most probably older. The totem groups, of which a phratry consists, are to be considered as younger branches of the original double family, which have arisen through wives being taken from other groups whose children again received the name of their mothers. If it should be asked why the members of two phratries should constantly intermarry, it should be pointed out that among communities in the lowest stage of civilisation women are not easily procurable, and the force of external circumstances would favour the unions just mentioned (Crawley, pp. 54 *et seq.*).

A biological explanation of the origin of exogamy is given by Herbert Risley. Without basing it on the assumption that primitive people have a knowledge of



the harmfulness of incest, he gives the following exposition : “ Exogamy can be brought under the law of natural selection without extending it too far. We know that among individuals or groups of individuals there exists a tendency to vary in their instincts, and that useful variations (such as are suitable to the conditions of life) tend to be preserved and transmitted by inheritance. Let us assume now that in a primitive community the men varied in the direction towards choosing wives from another community, and that this infusion of fresh blood was advantageous. The original instinct would then be strengthened by inheritance, and sexual selection would be added in the course of time. For an exogamous group would have a greater choice of women than an endogamous one, . . . and in the competition for women the best would fall to the strongest and most warlike men. In this way the strengthened exogamous groups would in time exterminate the endogamous neighbours, or at least take away their best marriageable maidens. Exogamy would spread partly through imitation, partly through the extermination of endogamous groups. The fact that we cannot explain how it came about that the people varied in the aforesaid direction is not fatal to this hypothesis. We do not doubt natural selection in the case of animals because we cannot give the exact cause of a favourable variation.”

E. Westermarck holds a similar theory about the cessation of incest. He thinks that “ among the

ancestors of man, as among other animals, there was, no doubt, a time when blood relationship was no bar to sexual intercourse. But variations here, as elsewhere, would naturally present themselves; and those of our ancestors who avoided in-and-in breeding would survive, while the others would gradually decay and ultimately perish. Thus an instinct would be developed which would be powerful enough, as a rule, to prevent injurious unions. Of course it would display itself simply as an aversion on the part of individuals to union with others with whom they lived; but these, as a matter of fact, would be blood relations, so that the result would be the survival of the fittest. Whether man inherited the feeling from the predecessors from whom he sprang, or whether it was developed after the evolution of distinctly human qualities, we do not know. It must necessarily have arisen at a stage when family ties became comparatively strong, and children remained with their parents until the age of puberty or even longer."

It may be surmised that the impulse towards the appearance of the exogamous tendency arose through economic progress, which led to an increase of the means of existence, and this in its turn produced a more friendly relationship between neighbouring groups that previously had quarrelled about food. The men thus came into contact with strange women, and this awakened a heightened sexual feeling, in other words the instinct which is said to have led to the avoidance



of incest. Thus among the peoples on a very low economic level (*e.g.*, the Pigmies) no laws for the prevention of incest are to be found, a fact that may be held to confirm this idea. Primitive people could in any case not understand the harmfulness of incest, while it is certain that strange members of the opposite sex could exert a stronger attraction, and thus render the sexual impulse permanent, which previously was periodical, as among the animals.

## V

### BIRTH AND FETICIDE

THE slow increase in the population of primitive peoples, which is also to be noticed wherever the conditions of life have not been influenced by European settlers and missionaries, is chiefly due to the want of proper midwifery, and no less to the frequent practice of abortion. The opinion is often met with, particularly in older writings, that among primitive people childbirth is extremely easy. But more extended knowledge has shown how dangerous childbirth is for the primitive mother also. Though childbirth is a natural physiological process, it does not always pass off quite without danger, no less under natural conditions than among highly civilised peoples. Primitive people know full well that the hour of childbirth is the hardest time in a woman's life, but not all have progressed far enough in the knowledge of physiology to be able to render efficient assistance to the woman in labour. Some people leave her, incredible as it may seem to us, without any assistance, either through indifference to life or through a superstitious fear of the mystery of life. Such cases are, however, very rare exceptions. Sometimes means are used for furthering the birth that are not only inefficacious, but actually injurious.



Often, however, delivery is actually furthered by the assistance given. Internal manipulation is seldom resorted to, and operations are still more rare. R. W. Felkin's report about the operation of Cæsarian section among the negroes in Uganda seems to be unique. Ploss and Bartels have compiled a great deal of information about childbirth among primitive people. We add here some examples from the later literature.

Feticide occurs most likely among all primitive peoples to a larger or lesser degree, and injures them accordingly. The reasons are the same as with us: inability to support a large number of children or aversion to the worries of child-rearing. Unmarried girls procure abortion usually because the child might be a hindrance to a future marriage, particularly when the father of the expected child jilts the mother. Still pre-marital births are not always considered a disgrace among primitive people. The abortives resorted to are generally inefficacious, though some native peoples have discovered really effective remedies. Külz (p. 18) says quite rightly, "It is to be assumed that woman everywhere, even in a low state of civilisation, has her attention directed to the occurrence of involuntary premature birth by often recurring effective causes. Such external causes are not very remote from the mechanically and medically produced abortions. We only need to think of the fact that among all primitive peoples the chief work in the fields falls to the women, and that it is just heavy labour that has the tendency

to interrupt pregnancy. It required only some little thought to discover this frequently observed coincidence and to learn from the involuntary interruption of pregnancy how to produce it voluntarily. . . . In the same way the production of abortions by poisons can easily be derived from a rational application of chance remedies producing corresponding involuntary effects. . . . Just as primitive man discovered many medicinal plants by repeatedly partaking of them, so he also found out the specific use of some of these for feticide. This could happen the more readily as among abortive remedies in use there were many that in a way served him as food and condiment, such as nutmeg, or the papaia kernels, or others that he used at the same time for poisoning fish, or others, again, like the aperient *Cajanus indicus*, which in moderate doses acts medicinally, in large doses, however, as an abortive."

The use of poisons and mechanical feticide not only brings about limitation of offspring, but often results in the death of the mother. Where they are very prevalent they contribute greatly to the scarcity of women, with all its attendant biological disadvantages. The contact of primitive people with Europeans generally increases the frequency of abortions. This is due partly to the desire for hiding the results of sexual intercourse with strangers, partly to the incitement to loose living which the acquaintance with European culture sometimes brings about.



How defective the state of midwifery is among primitive people is shown by many accounts in newer works of ethnology. Thus the missionary Endle writes (p. 41) : " The native tribes of Assam and Burma have no special midwives. Every old woman may perform the duties of a midwife, and she does it without payment. There is no information about the treatment of the woman during parturition. The navel cord is generally cut off with a bamboo knife. The Katshâri do not perform this with one cut, but make five cuts in the case of a boy and seven for a girl. The mother is considered unclean for several weeks after her confinement. This is also the case among many races of Southern and Eastern Asia, and in other parts of the world. Isolation even before the confinement sometimes occurs, and is due to the belief that women in this state are unclean."

Among the savage tribes of Formosa the birth of a child passes off so lightly that the lying-in woman is able to go on with her work on the following day. She only avoids heavy labour in the field for a month. After the birth certain superstitious ceremonies, according to old customs, are performed, such as driving away the devil, etc. Among many tribes twins are held to be a misfortune, and the second child is therefore killed. This also occurs frequently in other places (W. Müller, p. 230).

Among the Igorots of Bontoc (Philippines) the woman works in the field almost to the hour of her

confinement. There are no festivities or ceremonies connected with the birth. The father of the child, if he is the husband of the woman, is present, as is also the woman's mother, but no one else. The parturient woman bends her body strongly forward, holding firmly on to the beam of the house, or she takes up an animal-like position, so that hands and feet are on the ground. Medicines and baths are not resorted to for hastening the labour pains, but the people present massage the abdomen of the labouring woman. About ten days after the birth her body is washed with warm water. There is no special diet, but the mother refrains from field work for two or three months. If twins are born, it is believed to be due to an evil spirit who has had connection with the woman whilst she was asleep. No blame is attached to the mother, but the quieter of the children (and when both children are quiet, the longer one) is buried alive near the house immediately after birth. Abortion is practised by married women as well as by single girls, if for some reason the child is not wanted. The mother warns her unmarried daughter against abortion, telling her that a girl who produces abortion will not get a faithful husband, but will become the common partner of several men. The foetus is driven off in the second month of pregnancy by hot baths and massage. Abortion is not considered a disgrace (Jenks).

Among the Kayan of Borneo there are everywhere older women who serve as midwives. One of them is



called in good time to the pregnant woman. She examines her abdomen from time to time, and pretends to be able to give the child the right position. She hangs some magical remedies about the living room, and applies various remedies externally. The pregnant woman follows her usual occupation until the labour pains commence. Then the midwife and other old relatives or friends assist her. The husband may also remain in the room, but he is prevented by a screen from seeing the parturient woman, who gets hold tightly of a cloth hung over or in front of her. The pains are generally of short duration, rarely lasting more than two or three hours. In order to prevent the rising of the child, the women bind a cloth tightly round the abdomen of the parturient woman, and two of them press firmly on the womb on either side. After the delivery of the child the navel cord is cut with a bamboo knife. If the after-birth does not follow soon, the women become anxious ; two of them lift up the patient, and if that has no result, the navel cord is fastened to an axe in order to prevent it from re-entering the body, and presumably also to hasten the delivery of the after-birth. Internal manipulations are not resorted to. The after-birth is buried. If the child is born with a caul, the caul is dried, pounded into powder, and used in later years as medicine for the child. If the labour pains are exceptionally severe or long-lasting, or if an accident happens, the news travels rapidly. Everybody is overcome by fear, as

the death of a parturient woman is particularly dreaded. The men and the boys take flight. If death actually ensues, most of the men remain in hiding for some time, and the corpse is quickly buried by old men and women who are least afraid of death.

The pregnant women of the Punan of Borneo continue with their usual work until the arrival of labour pains, and they resume it immediately after the confinement. To assist delivery the body is tightly bound above the womb. Nothing further is known about special help (Hose and McDougall, II., pp. 154, 185).

The Papua women are said to give birth easily, as a rule, but difficult deliveries and fatal cases do occur exceptionally. The custom exists in various places for the mother to throw the after-birth into the river or the sea after confinement (Williamson, p. 178; Seligmann, p. 85). Of the Mafulu Williamson says that when the after-birth is thrown into the river the mother gives the new-born child some water to drink. If the child partakes of it, it is considered a good omen; otherwise the child is believed not to be viable and is drowned. Williamson thinks that the purpose of this custom is to enable the mother to choose whether she wishes to keep the child alive or not. It also may happen that a childless woman accompanies the mother to the river and there adopts the child. Wilful abortion also occurs very often, not only in single girls, but also in married women, who thus keep their families small.



Among the Barriai in New Pomerania the woman is confined whilst sitting on a log of wood, being massaged from above downwards by an older woman. The husband is not allowed to be present. The birth generally passes off quite easily. The navel cord is cut off with an obsidian knife. The parents may not eat pork and certain kinds of fish until the child has begun to walk. Disregard of this prohibition is believed to bring about the death of the child. The parents abstain also during this time from sexual intercourse. Abortives do not seem to be known, though miscarriages sometimes occur through the rough treatment of pregnant women by men (Friederici, p. 89). In Polynesia abortion is generally produced by women professionally. This is brought about by the use of certain foods or drinks, by the application of mechanical means, etc. How widespread feticide is in Melanesia can be seen from a statement of Parkinson, according to whom in New Mecklenburg quite young girls make no secret of having produced abortion three or four times. Among the Jabim (Finschhafen) the mothers present their daughters with abortives when they get married (Buschan, I., p. 62).

On the eastern islands of the Torres Straits (Australia) the women chew as a prevention of pregnancy the leaves of *Callicarpa*, or of a *Eugenia* species called *sobe*, also the leaves of a large shrub called *bok*; but these remedies are inefficacious. Medicines and mechanical methods are used for abor-

tion. Among the former are the leaves of the convolvulus, of Clerodendron, *Pouzolzia microphylla*, *Macaranga tanarius*, *Terminala catappa*, Eugenia, *Hibiscus tiliaceus*, and Callicarpa. If these do not help, the abdomen is beaten with large stones, with a rope or twigs or a wand, or a heavy load is put on it. Sometimes the woman leans with her back against a tree, and two men grasp a wand and press it against her abdomen, so as to bring about the delivery of the foetus. This often results in the death of the mother.

On the Easter Island, in the Eastern Pacific Ocean, there were several men with a knowledge of midwifery, but recently only one of them has survived. Nowadays older women act as midwives. Walter Knoche writes (1912, pp. 659 *et seq.*) : " The birth takes place either in the open or in the house, the woman standing with legs spread out, or recently in a sitting position. The accoucheur stands behind the parturient woman, embracing her abdomen. The thumbs are spread out, and touch each other in a horizontal position somewhat above the navel, while the remainder of the hand is turned diagonally downwards. In this way massage is applied by a slow, rhythmical, strong and kneading movement vertically from above downwards. When the birth is sufficiently advanced, the child is drawn out ; the assistant bites off the navel cord (among some Brazilian Indian tribes the husband does this, but on the Easter Island he takes no part in the delivery) ; then a knot is made a few centimetres from the navel.



The after-birth is not specially dealt with ; it is buried. The navel cord, however, is placed in a calabash, which is buried or put under a rock. After the event the lying-in woman lies down upon a mat in the house, and warm; flat, fairly heavy stones are applied to the abdomen. Perhaps this is the reason why even women who have had difficult confinements still preserve a good figure. The infant remains at the mother's breast for about a year." Knoche also heard that the women sometimes pass a piece of an alga into the vulva right up to the womb before intercourse with a stranger, believing this method to be a very safe one. It could, unfortunately, not be ascertained whether this precaution was formerly, as seems likely, resorted to generally in order to limit the number of children, or whether its use was only intended to keep the tribe untainted by foreign blood. The latter assumption is contradicted by the fact that " the Easter Island women have children from strangers living for some time on the Easter Island, and that nowadays the use of contraceptives in the case of strangers who come and go quickly may simply be due to the circumstance that at the birth of a child there would be no man to support it. It is most probable that the use of preventives had its origin in Malthusian principles. The little island, whose population has been variously estimated by travellers of the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century at a few thousand, must herewith have reached its maximum number of inhabitants,

which could of necessity not be exceeded. Deaths and births had therefore to balance. This employment of contraceptives in Polynesia is unique, and it may be truly reckoned as a sign of a higher civilisation, together with other facts, such as the existence of a script, of stone houses and of large stone idols, the Moai, which have made this lonely little island so famous. On the other Oceanic Islands, as, for instance, on the westward-situated Tahiti, infanticide, committed by the mother as many as ten times in succession, served to limit the number of children, either on account of economy or for reasons of convenience. Contraceptives are otherwise unknown in Oceania."

Of the Jao in East Africa Karl Weule relates (p. 61): "During the delivery the parturient woman lies upon her back on a mat on the floor of the hut. The older children and the husband are not allowed to be present, but a number of older women are there, amongst whom there is always a near relative of the husband, who takes special note of any evidence of extra-marital intercourse given by the parturient woman. It is the chief business of the midwives to submit the woman to a very strict *questionnaire*: 'How many men have you had, three, or four, or even more? Your child will not come until you have mentioned the right father. Yes, you will die, if you do not tell us how many men you have had.' Such speeches are hurled at the woman from all sides. No mechanical help is given her. She rolls about in pain,



under great bodily and mental torture, and shrieks and cries until all is over. The navel cord is cut off by an old woman. Ancient instruments, such as are used by the East African Bantu tribes, are unknown among the Jao. The cutting of the navel cord seems to be performed clumsily, for umbilical rupture, which has become an ideal of beauty in many places in Eastern Africa, is here frequent. The after-birth and the navel cord are buried, if possible without a witness. They are considered effective magical remedies. The new-born child is washed and then wrapped in a cloth or a piece of bark fabric. A real lying-in is not kept up ; the mother gets up again the same or the following day. Sex intercourse can only be resumed again with the permission of the village elder. It is only given when the child can sit up, or when it is six or seven months old. Children are welcome ; twins are no less joyfully received. But infanticide is said to occur. If, however, children are not wanted, married women as well as girls resort to abortion. Plant juices are generally used for this purpose, though sometimes mechanical means are resorted to. Abortion is in no way considered reprehensible. In order to prevent conception, the woman puts herself into communication with a *fundi*, who understands something of making knots. The *fundi* goes into the wood, seeks out two different barks, and twists them together into a cord. Into the cord he rubs the yolk of an egg, for to the Jao the curse of infertility abides in the egg. He knots

into the cord three knots, saying at the same time, 'You tree are called thus and thus, and you thus; but you egg, you become a living animal. But now I do not want anything living.' He then twists the final knot. This cord is worn by the woman round her body. Boots are also placed under her head at night to prevent conception. If the woman wishes to become pregnant again, she needs only to untie the knots in the cord, to put it into water, and then drink the water. Afterwards the cord is thrown away."

Among the Makua, on the Makonda plateau in East Africa, at the first sign of labour pains the woman lies down upon her back on a mat in the house. A cloth is put under her back by the helping women, which is drawn tightly and pulled up when the pains become stronger. After the birth the navel cord is cut, not with a knife, but with a splinter from a millet stalk. Here, as in other phases in the life of man, an ancient implement has survived for sacred purposes long after the period of its common use. The navel cord is not tied, but dries off. The removed part is buried. The lying-in woman remains at home three or four days.

Among the Masai an old woman is always called in as midwife. If the birth goes on normally, no superstitious or useless operations are undertaken (Merker, pp. 189 *et seq.*). Should an increase of labour pains appear necessary, the parturient woman is led round by the women for a few steps, and if this does not produce the desired result light massage is applied.



Only when these remedies prove to be inefficacious an extreme step is taken : the labouring woman is slowly lifted up by her feet by several women until her body hangs perpendicularly and her head touches the ground, whereupon the midwife massages the body in the direction of the navel. Medicaments are seldom used for hastening the delivery. Internal manual or operative manipulations do not seem to be practised anywhere. In the case of a narrow pelvis preventing birth, no help is available ; mother and child perish. The confinement takes place on all fours or in a sitting position ; in the latter case the legs and the back are pressed against the posts of the hut. For the production of abortion a decoction of dried goat dung or of *cordia quarensis* or some other remedy is used.

Of the Hottentots it has sometimes been reported that the women have easy births. According to Schulze's inquiries (p. 218), this is not always the case. The birth takes place in the side position. During very difficult births the women attempt to widen the vulva of the parturient woman. If that does not help, the perineum is deliberately torn up to the anus. No attempt is made to cure the perineal tear, for the belief exists that it would hinder the passage of the next child. All manipulations are carried out beneath the skin rug under which the woman lies. The navel cord is cut without delay ; no one troubles about the delivery of the after-birth. The woman resumes her occupation generally on the seventh or eighth day.

Feticide is not unusual among the Hottentots. A hot decoction of badger urine, drunk, if necessary, for several days in succession, is considered an effective abortive remedy. The procedure itself is characteristically called "drinking and falling" (Schulze, p. 320).

Among the Uti-Krag Indians of the Rio Doce (Espírito Santo, Brazil) the woman goes through the labour alone. She disappears in the bush, and herself bites off the navel cord; after the delivery she goes to the nearest stream to wash herself and the child, and rejoins her tribe immediately (Walter Knoche, 1913, p. 397).

Among the Indians of the Aiary, when a woman is taken with labour pains all the men leave their house, which is common to several families. The woman lies in her hammock in her part of the house, which is securely closed by a lattice railing. All the women remain with her and help at the birth. The navel cord and after-birth are buried immediately on the spot. After the birth the mother and the child remain strictly secluded for five days. The husband remains in the house during the lying-in period, but there is no real *couvade* (the male lying-in custom).

The women of the Kobéua Indians give birth in the common family house, or in an outlying hut, or even in the wood, with the assistance of all married women, who first paint their faces red for the festive occasion. The navel cord is cut off by the husband's mother with a blade of scleria grass, and is immediately buried,



together with the after-birth. Of twins the second born is killed, or the female if they are of different sexes. After the birth, the witch doctor performs exorcism. The parents keep up a five days' lying-in, and eight days after the birth a drinking feast is held (Koch-Grünberg, I., p. 182 ; II., p. 146).

Among the Bakairi of Brazil, according to Karl von den Steinen (p. 334), abortion is said to occur frequently. The women are afraid of the confinement. They prepare for it by drinking tea, and mechanical measures are also resorted to. The women are delivered on the floor in a kneeling position, holding firmly to a post. The hammocks must not be soiled. Women who have had experience declared with emphasis, and showed by pantomime, that the pains were great. But they soon get up and go to work, the husband going through the famous *couvade* (the man's lying-in), keeping strict diet, not touching his weapons and passing the greatest part of his time in his hammock. He only leaves the house to satisfy his physical needs, and lives completely on a thin *pogu*, manioc cake crumbled into water. There exists the belief that anything else might injure the child, as if the child itself ate meat, fish or fruit. The *couvade* only ends when the remainder of the navel cord falls off.

Among the Bororo, according to the same author (p. 503), the woman is delivered in the wood. The father cuts the navel cord with a bamboo splinter, and ties it with a thread. For two days the parents do not

eat anything, and on the third day they may only partake of some warm water. If the man were to eat he and the child would become ill. The after-birth is buried in the wood. The woman is not allowed to bathe until the reappearance of menstruation; but then, as generally after menstruation, she does it frequently. Abortion by the help of internal means is said to be frequent, especially among the Ranchao women. If the mother wishes to stop suckling, they squeeze the breasts out, and "dry the milk over the fire, whereupon it keeps away." Medicine for sick children, which the chemist had prepared, was swallowed by the parents, as among the Bakairi.

Among the Paressi the woman is confined in a kneeling position, being held by her mother under her breast. The *couvade* is also customary among them.



## VI

### IGNORANCE OF THE PROCESS OF GENERATION

THE mentality of the different branches of mankind varies a great deal. A good example of this is the fact that there are peoples who do not know the connection between cohabitation and conception. There are other tribes, again, who, as we have reason to assume, did not possess this knowledge previously. In fact, Ferdinand von Reitzenstein thinks that there was a time when the connection between cohabitation and pregnancy was unknown to all mankind, and he adduces examples which show that traces of such a state are to be found in the legends and customs of many peoples. And, says von Reitzenstein, we need hardly be surprised at this ignorance of the generative process when we consider that "it is only since the days of Swammerdam, who died in 1685, that we know that both egg and spermatozoon have to come together for fertilisation, and only since Du Barry (1850) that we know that the spermatozoon must penetrate the egg." The belief in supernatural conception has been preserved, not only in the Christian Churches, but also in the myths of the gods in most religions. Originally man could not conclude from the mere appearance of a pregnant woman that the cohabitation which had occurred

months ago was the cause of her condition. Primitive people do not bring into causal connection phenomena separated by wide intervals.

Von Reitzenstein writes that primitive people, who generally marry their girls before the advent of puberty, must have been turned aside from seeing the connection between cohabitation and pregnancy because these girls had no children at first in spite of having sexual intercourse. But to this it may be objected that even the lowest races must have noticed that pregnancy only occurs after the advent of the first menstruation. The appearance and abeyance of menstruation must have formed a step towards the understanding of the generative process. It is otherwise with von Reitzenstein's objection that by far the largest number of cohabitations do not lead to pregnancy. Even among comparatively enlightened races this observation led to the assumption that some additional supernatural process is necessary for fertilisation. Among the Australians, the least developed race of man, the necessity of cohabitation for pregnancy is totally unknown. Baldwin Spencer and Frank J. Gillen have shown (1899, pp. 123 *et seq.*; 1904, pp. 145, 606) that among the natives of Northern and Central Australia there exists the general belief that the children penetrate into the woman as minute spirits. These spirits are said to come from persons that have lived once before and are reborn in this manner. The belief in rebirth, together with the ignorance of the generative process,



is very widespread in Australia, *e.g.*, among many tribes in Queensland, in Southern Australia, in the Northern Territory and in Western Australia. It is now too late to get reliable information in this matter from those parts of Australia where the natives are in regular contact with whites. Spencer takes it as certain that the belief in asexual propagation was once general in Australia.

Among all those tribes by whom this belief has been preserved up to the present the traditions concerning the tribal ancestors are quite definite. Among the Arunta, for instance, who live in the district of the transcontinental telegraph line between Charlotte Waters and the McDonnell mountains, and among whom ignorance of the process of generation was first discovered, there exists the tradition that in bygone times, called *altcheringa*, the male and female ancestors of the tribe carried spirit children about with them, which they put down in certain places. These spirit children, like the spirits of the tribal ancestors, themselves enter into the women and are borne by them. The Arunta believe that at the death of a person his spirit returns to a special tree or rock, out of which it came, and which is called *nandcha*. It remains there until it thinks fit once more to enter into a woman, and thus go amongst the living. All these spirits are called *iruntarinia*. But before the first rebirth of an *iruntarinia* there arose another spirit from the *nandcha*, which is the double of the

*iruntarinia*, and is called *arumburinga*. This *arumburinga* never becomes embodied, but remains always a spirit, which accompanies its human representative whenever inclined, and, as a rule, remains invisible. Only specially gifted people, particularly witch doctors, can see *arumburinga*; they can even speak with them. Among other Australian tribes which believe in rebirth, no belief in spirits like the *arumburinga* has been traced (compare B. Ankermann, "Totenkult und Seelenglauben bei Afrikanischen Völkern," *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, Jahrgang 50, pp. 89 *et seq.*).

There is, however, general agreement in the belief that the ancestral parents brought into the world the spirit children, who are continually reborn. Among many tribes, as the Dieri and the Warramunga, it is believed that the sex changes at every rebirth, so that the ancestral spirit once takes the form of a male and the next time that of a female. The conditions are such among the Australians that their ignorance of the connection between sexual intercourse and propagation is not at all surprising. Spencer points out that among the Australians there are no "virgins," for as soon as a girl is sexually ripe she is given to a particular man, with whom she has sexual intercourse right through life. In this respect there is no difference among the native women; yet the people see that some women have children and others none, and also that the women with children have them at unequal intervals that have no connection with sexual intercourse.



Besides, the women know that they are pregnant only when they feel the quickening, and that is often at a time when they have had nothing to do with a man. Therefore they attempt to explain the origin of children in some other manner, which is in accordance with the very primitive mode of thought of these unprogressive people. In this connection it may be mentioned that the Australian mothers attribute the birth of half-castes to their having eaten too much of the white man's flour. Therefore old Australians accept without question as their own the half-caste children of their wives, and treat them as such. Though the natives of Northern Queensland know that the animals propagate sexually, they dispute this as regards human beings, because man, in contradistinction to the animals, has a living spirit, a soul, which could not be begotten by a material process. A. Lang thinks that with regard to the genesis of mankind the psychology of these primitive people has obscured their knowledge of physiology. According to him, the idea that there is no connection between cohabitation and generation cannot be considered as primary in man.

A proof of this ignorance of the fertilisation process among the Australians is the splitting of the penis practised by them. Otherwise these tribes, which have a scarcity of women and children, and which desire progeny, would not perform an operation by which the semen fails to fulfil its function in the majority of cases of cohabitation. It is becoming

more and more certain that this splitting of the penis serves exclusively the purpose of lust, and is least of all intended as a deliberate birth preventative (von Reitzenstein).

Evidences of the ignorance of generation are also to be found elsewhere in cases where the above-mentioned objection of Lang does not apply. In Melanesia the connection between cohabitation and conception seems to have been unknown until lately. R. Thurnwald says that among the tribes on the Bismarck and Solomon Islands visited by him this connection is well known nowadays, but the causal relationship is not so clearly conceived as by our psychologically trained physicians. As a natural phenomenon conception sometimes occurs and sometimes not. Intentional and real forgetting, inexact calculation of time, and the strangeness of men towards women, who are held as inferiors, all make it appear logically probable that conception can take place without cohabitation. To this must be added the weirdness of the whole process, which is therefore given a mysterious interpretation, and also that mode of thought which connects the young product with the place where it is found, with the fruits of a plant, and with the young ones of a bird, etc. Codrington reports the same conditions among the Banks Islanders.

Many tribes of Central Borneo, being mentally and economically far above the Australian natives, assume that pregnancy only lasts four or five months, namely,



as long as it is recognised externally in the woman, and that the child enters the body of the woman shortly before the sign of pregnancy. These tribes of Borneo also do not know that the testicles are necessary for propagation (Nieuwenhuis, p. 144).

In Africa it has been established, at least of the Baganda, that they believe in the possibility of conception without cohabitation. Conceptional totemism, the assumption of impregnation by the animals venerated as totems, which exists among the Bakalai in the Congo region, points to a similar belief. Conceptional totemism also exists among the Indian tribes of North-western America (Frazer, Vol. II., pp. 506, 507, and 611, 612).

Among the ancient Mexicans there existed, according to von Reitzenstein, the belief that the children come from a supernal habitation, the flower land, to enter into the mother. Various objects were thought to carry the foetal germs, especially shuttlecocks and green jewels. For this reason these were placed on the mat for the Mexican bridal pair after the marriage ceremony. The rattle club is perhaps also considered as the bearer of fertility. In India various trees play a *rôle* in fertilisation ideas.

Noteworthy is the belief found in various places that only the nourishment of the child is supplied by the mother before birth, while the germ of the new being comes from the father. This is the opinion of certain tribes of South-east Australia described by Howitt

and the same belief exists among South American tribes who have the well-known *couvade*. Karl von den Steinen writes regarding this: "One might be tempted to explain this curious custom, which is very advantageous to the women, by the hunting life. But even if the custom suits the women, it is not evident why the men should have submitted to it. The father cuts off the navel cord of the new-born child, goes to bed, looks after the child, and fasts strictly until the rest of the navel cord falls off (or even longer). One might consider him as the professional doctor who also fasts like the student medicine-man, as otherwise his cure would be endangered and the child harmed. But not only the Xingu, but many other tribes, say that the father must not eat fish, meat, or fruit, as it would be the same as if the child itself ate them; and there is no reason to doubt that this is the real belief of the natives. The medicine-man of the village is always at disposal, and he is called in in all cases when the mother or child falls ill. The father is the patient in so far as he feels himself one with the child. Nor is it difficult to understand how this comes about. The native cannot very well know anything about the egg cell and the Graafian follicle, and he cannot know that the mother harbours elements corresponding to the bird's egg. For the native the man is the bearer of the egg, which, to put it clearly and concisely, he lays into the mother, and which she hatches during pregnancy." This idea of the *couvade*



is confirmed by linguistic peculiarities: there are the same or similar words for "father," "testicle," "egg," and "child." The child is considered part of the father, and therefore, as long as the child is at its weakest, the father must keep diet, and must avoid anything that the other could not digest. The child is considered the reproduction of the father, and "for the sake of the helpless, unintelligent creature, representing a miniature copy of himself, he must behave as if he were a child to whom no harm must come. Should the child happen to die in the first days, how could the father, with such views as he has, doubt that he is to blame, seeing that he has eaten indigestible things, particularly as all illnesses are due to the fault of others? What we call *pars pro toto* prevails in all folk belief in connection with witch or healing magic," though it cannot be assumed "that the magic worker has a clear conception of the 'part' with which he works. The *couvade* proceeds according to the same logic, only that in this case the whole stands for the 'part.' It comes to the same whether the enemy's hair is poisoned, and he is thus brought into a decline, or whether food is eaten which is harmful to the child detached from one's own body, because it could not digest it, at least not during the time when the detachment takes place."

Besides South America and Australia, the *couvade* is also frequent in Asia and Africa. Previously it existed also in South-western Europe. Hugo Kunike,

who gives a survey of the prevalence and literature of the *couvade*, thinks that this custom arose from prohibitions which the man was subject to in matriarchal families. The prohibitions condemned the man to inactivity for some time after the birth, so that he took to his hammock. There resulted an external condition which led to an analogy with the lying-in period. There can, according to Kunike, be no question of an imitation of the woman's lying-in, for with the South American Indians and other primitive peoples among whom the *couvade* is found no lying-in of the women occurs.



## VII

### MUTILATION OF SEX ORGANS

MUTILATIONS of the sex organs are performed by many primitive peoples for religious reasons. They occur much more rarely for the purpose of sex stimulation, as, *e.g.*, the artificial lengthening of the small labia among the Hottentots and the negro women and the slitting of the penis among the Australians. The most frequent mutilation is the abscission of the foreskin of the penis. Circumcision of boys is widespread in Asia, Africa, and Australia. Among the Mohammedan tribes of Asia and the negroes of Northern and Middle Africa it is mostly performed with a razor. In Indonesia a sharp bamboo splinter serves as the instrument for operation ; in other places sharp stone splinters are used. In addition to the familiar circular abscission of the foreskin, numerous primitive peoples practise incision of the foreskin, which is split downwards in its full length. Bleeding is stopped generally by very simple means, either by some kind of tampon or by styptic powders. In girls, as, for instance, on some of the Indonesian Islands, the operation often merely consists in the abscission of a small piece of the preputium clitoridis. Among the East African tribes, however, parts of the

mons veneris and of the large labia are removed, generally with a dirty razor. After the removal of the labia the two wounds are made to coalesce by letting the girl lie in a suitable position, or sometimes by a suture, which serves the purpose of closing up the vagina. A little tube is inserted to allow for micturition. The united parts are again partly severed for marriage, and completely in case of confinement. After the recovery from confinement partial occlusion is again resorted to (Bartels, p. 271).

Among the natives of Southern Asia living under the influence of Islam circumcision of boys is practised universally, but it is also customary among many peoples that are quite free from Islamitic influence.

Circumcision of girls is practised by various Islamitic peoples of Western Asia and India. The operation is performed by old women. In Baroda and Bombay the clitoris is cut away, ostensibly in order to lessen the sensuality of the girls. In the province of Sind the circumcision of girls is fairly prevalent, especially among the Pathan and Baluchi tribes. It is performed shortly before marriage by the barber's wife or a female servant, who uses a razor, and it is said to make the confinement easier. Among many tribes in the North-western border province the girls are also circumcised at the age of marriage, and here, besides the clitoris, the small labia are also sometimes cut away. In Baluchistan among some peoples the tip of the clitoris is pinched off; while among others the labia are slashed,



so that scars are formed. The operation is performed partly in childhood, partly on the bridal night ; in the latter case it assures the requisite flow of blood at the first coition. Among some tribes, in place of circumcision or in addition to it, the hymen is torn on the bridal night (should it still exist), and the vaginal entrance is wounded, so that bleeding is sure to take place at cohabitation. In Sind the castes which prostitute their women are said to practise partial infibulation for contracting the vagina. It is reported from the Punjab that formerly men leaving their home for a time used to close up the sex passage of the wives they left behind.

On the Philippine Islands circumcision is frequently practised by the non-Christian natives, but not everywhere. The Igorots of Luzon incise the foreskin of boys from four to seven years old at the upper side of the glans with a bamboo knife or the edge of a battle axe. They say this is necessary in order to prevent the skin from growing longer and longer. No other reason is now known to them for this operation. Circumcision is practised by the Mohammedans of the Southern Philippine Islands.

Incision of the foreskin is customary on the Indonesian Islands, thus, *e.g.*, on Buru, Ceram, the Watu-Bela Islands, in the Minahassa, partly also in the remaining North and Central Celebes, also on Ambon and Halmaheira. Circumcision is customary on the Aru and Kei Islands, on the Ceram Laut and Goram

group, in certain parts of Central Celebes, Ambon, etc. It is doubtful whether circumcision here is due to the influence of Islam.

Incision is practised on various islands in the Western Pacific Ocean, according to Friederici (p. 45), for instance, on New Guinea, on the south-east coast, among the Jabim and on the Astrolabe Bay. In wide districts of New Guinea, however, the inhabitants are not circumcised. On the island Umboi, between New Guinea and New Pomerania, incision is customary, also in various places on the north coast of New Pomerania, on the Witu Islands, some islands of the Admiralty group, etc. If incision is performed at a very early age, the result is similar to that of circumcision. Frequently, however, only completely mature young men are circumcised; in such cases the cut foreskin hangs down as an ugly brown flap. It is questionable whether this intensifies the women's excitement. As many people as possible are circumcised, in order to have the opportunity for a great festival. This is the result of the liking for numbers shown by primitive people, which is to be met with everywhere. For the operation, the person is laid on his back and held down by relatives. The boys scream and wince at the moment of cutting; but the adults are ashamed before the women, and take an areca nut, into which they bite. Among the East Barriari on the north coast of New Pomerania, the operator—a wise man, but not the priest—pushes an oblong piece



of wood under the preputium of the patient, and cuts it from the top downward with an obsidian splinter. The custom of incision is widespread in the New Hebrides, New Caledonia (with the exception of the Loyalty Islands), and also in Fiji.

While with the Empress Augusta River expedition in New Guinea, A. Roesike found the foreskin cut among a number of men. It was not a circumcision, nor an incision of the foreskin, but a deep cut into the glans about 1 to 1½ centimetres long, sometimes a single one, sometimes a double one crosswise.

Among some tribes of Indonesia a mutilation is customary, which is most likely intended to intensify the lust of the women. It consists in a perforation of the glans or the body of the male organ, into which a little stick is inserted. These little sticks are called *palang*, *ampallang*, *utang* or *kampion*, and are replaced on journeys or at work by feather quills. Among some tribes several little sticks are stuck through the penis. Nieuwenhuis describes this operation as follows: "At first the glans is made bloodless by pressing it between the two arms of a bent strip of bamboo. At each of these arms there are openings at the required position opposite each other, through which a sharp pointed copper pin is pressed after the glans has become less sensitive. Formerly a pointed bamboo chip was used for this purpose. The bamboo clamp is removed, and the pin, fastened by a cord, is kept in the opening until

the canal has healed up. Later on the copper pin (*utang*) is replaced by another one, generally of tin, which is worn constantly. Only during hard work or at exhausting enterprises is the metal pin replaced by a wooden one." Exceptionally brave men have the privilege, together with the chief, of boring a second canal, crossing the first, into the glans. Distinguished men may, in addition, wear a ring round the penis, which is cut from the scales of the *pangolin*, and studded with blunt points. It may hence be concluded that the perforation of the penis is not intended as an endurance test for the young men, but that the pin is introduced for the heightening of sexual excitement. Many natives assert that the insertion of a pin in the perforated penis has the purpose of preventing pederasty, which is very frequent among the Malays (compare Nieuwenhuis, Vol. I., p. 78; Kleiweg de Zwaan, p. 301; Meyer, p. 878; Hose and McDougall, Vol. II., p. 170; Buschan, 1912, p. 240).

Among the Australians the slitting of the male urethra is frequently practised. Formerly it was believed that this custom was intended to prevent conception. But as the Australians who are not under European influence are ignorant of the process of generation, this cannot be its meaning. The operation is generally performed in boyhood or early youth, but even adult men undergo it. Where this operation on the urethra is customary, the hymen of the girls is cut, the cut often going through the perineum. Many



tribes practise simple circumcision. Among the Australian tribe Worgait, for instance, certain relatives decide about the circumcision of the boys. After a previous elaborate ceremonial the boy who is to be circumcised is laid on the backs of three men lying on the ground ; another man sits on his chest, one holds his legs apart, and the sixth performs the operation by drawing the foreskin forward and cutting it off with a sharp splinter of stone. The group is hidden from the view of the women by a screen made of pieces of bark. Afterwards the youth is instructed by old men how he must behave as a man, and he is informed about the matters kept secret from women. He remains for another two months under the supervision of two sons of his maternal uncle, and has further to go through a number of ceremonies. Other tribes of the Australian North Territory have similar customs.

Circumcision among the Hamites of East Africa is particularly elaborate. As an example we may take the pastoral tribe of the Nandi. These people used to circumcise boys every seven and a half years, and celebrated the occasion with great festivals. Since 1905 circumcision takes place at shorter intervals. The usual age for circumcision is from the fifteenth to the nineteenth year. Younger boys are only circumcised if they are rich orphans, or if their fathers are old men. The ceremony begins at the time of the first quarter of the moon. Three days before the operation the boys are given over by their fathers or guardians

into the charge of old men, called *moterenic*, as many as ten boys going to two of these men. The *moterenic* and their boys betake themselves to a neighbouring wood, where they build a hut, in which they spend the six months after the circumcision. The boys have their heads shaved and are given a strong aperient of *Arsidia* sp. Warriors visit the hut, and take away all the boys' clothes and ornaments. Then young girls visit the boys and give them a part of their clothing and ornaments. After the boys have put these on they inform their relations of the forthcoming circumcision. There is dancing on the next day, after which the warriors draw the boys aside to discover from their expressions whether they will behave cowardly or bravely at the circumcision. After this examination the boys receive necklaces from their girl friends, with which they decorate themselves. After sunset they must listen to the sharpening of the operating knife. Warriors are present, and tease the boys. Later on all undress, and a procession is formed with a *moterenic* at the head and rear of it. Four times they have to crawl through a small cage, where warriors are stationed at the entrance and exit with nettles and hornets. With the former they beat the boys in the face and on the sex organs; the hornets they set on their backs. A fire is kept burning in the middle of the room, around which old men are seated. Each boy has to step before them and beg for permission to be circumcised. He is questioned about his early life; and if the old men think that he has told



an untruth or is hiding something, he is put among nettles. If the old men are satisfied with his words, the price of the circumcision has to be arranged, whereupon the boys are led back to their huts. There the warriors and elders assemble the next morning, and at dawn the circumcision begins. The boy to be circumcised is supported by the senior *moterenic*, the others sitting close by and looking on. The operator kneels before the boy, and with a quick cut performs the first part of the operation; the foreskin is drawn forward and cut off at the tip of the glans penis. The surrounding men watch the boy's face in order to see whether he winces or shows any sign of pain. If this is the case, he is called a coward, and receives the dishonourable nickname of *kilpit*; he is not allowed to be present at later circumcisions nor at the children's dances. The brave boys receive bundles of ficus from the women, who welcome them with cries of joy when they return the necklaces which they have previously received from their girl friends. The foreskins are collected and placed in an ox horn. Friends and relatives make merry together, while the second part of the operation begins. At this only sterile girls may be present, and also women who have lost several brothers and sisters at short intervals. Many boys become unconscious during this part of the operation. The wounds are only washed with cold water, and the boys are led back to their huts, where they spend some weeks quietly. During the first four days they are not allowed

to touch food with their hands ; they must eat either out of a half-calabash or with the help of some leaves. They get what they like, also milk and meat. But, apart from their *moterenic*, nobody may come near them for four days. Afterwards the hand-washing ceremony is performed ; the foreskins are taken out of the ox horn, sacrificed to their god, and then buried in cowdung at the foot of a croton tree. Now the boys may eat with their hands again, but still no one may see them except the young children who bring them food. Three months later, when the boys are quite well again, they have to go through a new ceremony, during which they have to dive repeatedly into the river. If one of them should meet with an accident, his father has to kill a goat. Only now may the boys move about freely, but they still have to wear women's clothes (as hitherto) and a special head-dress that hides their faces. They must not enter a cattle kraal nor come near the cattle, nor are they allowed to be outdoors when the hyena howls. This period of semi-seclusion lasts about eight weeks. Its conclusion is celebrated by a feast. Still more ceremonies follow, and again a feast, after which the boys finally enter the status of manhood.

Girls are circumcised when some of them in the settlement have reached marriage age. They are shaved, given aperients, have to put on men's clothes, which they receive from their lovers, and take their clubs, loin bells, etc. After three days' ceremonial the



circumcision is performed in the morning, at which the mothers and some old women are present ; men are only admitted when they have lost several brothers and sisters in succession. The mothers run about crying and shouting during the operation. Only the clitoris is cut out. If a girl behaves bravely, she may return the clothes and other things of her lover, otherwise they are thrown away. The girls, too, must not touch food with their hands for four days ; afterwards they are put into long dresses with a kind of head mask, and have to go through a period of seclusion. After the completion of various other formalities they are fit for marriage (Hollis, 1909, pp. 52 *et seq.*).

No satisfactory explanation has so far been forthcoming of the purpose of these elaborate circumcision customs. Similar customs are observed by other Hamites of Eastern Africa.

Among the Masai there exists the belief that circumcision was introduced by the command of God (Merker, p. 60). After the circumcision boys and girls are considered grown up. The former have to be circumcised as soon as they are strong enough to take part in a war expedition. The circumcision of sons whose parents have no property and of poor orphans takes place last of all. For the meat banquet which the newly circumcised hold every one present has to supply an ox. Poor boys must first acquire it by working for it. The circumcision is a public affair, and is arranged by the witch doctor in certain years.

The old men consult in all the districts, and fix a day for the circumcision of the first batch of boys. All the boys circumcised during a certain number of years form an age class with a particular name (as among the Nandi). Several weeks before the circumcision the boys, adorned with many ornaments, dance and sing in their own and neighbouring kraals, in order to express their joy at their approaching admission into the warrior class. On the day before the circumcision the boys' heads are shaved. On the appointed day itself the boys and the warriors who are present at the operation assemble before dawn at the place chosen by the operators. The boys pour cold water over each other, so as to become less sensitive. After the operation the wounded member is washed with milk; no remedy for stopping the bleeding is applied. Later on all the men of the neighbourhood assemble in the kraal, where they are regaled with meat and honey beer by the parents of the newly circumcised boys. The girls are circumcised as soon as signs of puberty become evident, sometimes even earlier. The operation consists in a complete abscission of the clitoris. The wound, as with the boys, is washed in milk. The girl remains in her mother's hut until the wound is healed. As soon as the man to whom the girl is promised as bride hears of her recovery he pays her father the remaining part of the bride-price, and nothing more stands in the way of the marriage.

Among the Somals in North-east Africa the boys



are circumcised when six years old, and the girls are infibulated at three or four years of age. The infibulation is preceded by the shortening of the clitoris and the clipping of the external labia. The operation is performed by experienced women, who also sew up the inner labia (except for a small aperture) with horse-hair, bast, or cotton thread. The girls have to rest for several days with their legs tied together. Before marriage the above-mentioned women or the girls themselves undo the stitching, which, however, is in most cases only severed completely before the confinement (Paulitschke, p. 24).

In Western Africa most peoples practise the circumcision of boys. The age at which this takes place varies greatly. The Duala in Cameron have the boys circumcised when four or five years old, the Bakwiri as late as the twelfth to fourteenth year, and the Dahomey even postpone the circumcision to the twentieth year. But it always takes place before marriage, as women would refuse to have relationship with uncircumcised men (Buschan, "Sitten," III., p. 40).

A peculiar disfigurement of the sex organs is customary among the Hottentots, Bushmen, and many Bantu tribes of Middle and South Africa. This consists in the artificial elongation of the small labia. It was first observed among the Hottentot women, and therefore the elongated labia were called the "Hottentot apron." Among the Jao, Makonde, and other East African Bantu tribes, the girls at the ages

of seven, eight, or nine years are instructed by old women about sex intercourse and their behaviour towards grown-up people. At the same time they are encouraged to systematically alter the natural shape of the genital organs by continually pulling at the labia minora and thus unnaturally lengthening them. Karl Weule has seen such disfigured organs from 7 to 8 centimetres long. According to the assertion of numerous male natives, the elongated labia assume such dimensions that they hang half-way down to the knee. The main purpose of this disfiguration seems to be erotic ; it is said to excite the men. The assumption that the labia minora are naturally exceptionally large among the Hottentots is certainly wrong. Karl Weule is right when he definitely maintains that his proof of the artificial elongation of the labia among the East Africans establishes it as an indubitable fact that the famous Hottentot apron is also an artificial product. Le Vaillant established this independently almost 100 years before Weule ; but the error dragged on from decade to decade, chiefly because nobody troubled or had the good fortune to study the puberty rites as Weule did. It is time at last to give up this erroneous idea.

Among the Jaos the operation of the boys consists in a combination of incision with circumcision so that only a tiny piece of the under-part of the preputium remains. The boy must show courage at the operation. Screams, if they occur, are drowned by the



laughter of the bystanders. Bleeding is stilled by bark powder. The boys have to lie down for about twenty days or more, until healing has taken place. As usual, circumcision is combined with instruction about sex behaviour.

In former times the Jaos are said to have imposed castration as a punishment on men for misbehaviour with the chief's wife (Weule, pp. 29, 35). Castration still takes place for this reason among other negro races, especially the Mohammedan Sudanese.

In North America the few Indians still living in a state of nature do not practise mutilation of the sex organs. In South America circumcision exists among the linguistically isolated tribes and the neighbouring Aruake and Karaib tribes of the north-west, also among the tribes on the Ucayali and the tributaries of the Apure (W. Schmidt, p. 1048). The Kayapo Indians on the Araguay river cut the frenulum of the penis with a taquara splinter, and the penis cuff is fastened on to the rolled-up foreskin (W. Kissenberth, p. 55).

The purpose of circumcision is probably to prolong the sex act, for the bare glans is less sensitive than the covered one. Friederici says (p. 89) that the black boys congregating on the stations and plantations frequently discuss these matters amongst themselves; they know that the glans of the circumcised is much less sensitive than that of the uncircumcised. Many authors are of the opinion that the abscission or

incision of the foreskin in boys has the purpose of making cohabitation easier in later years, as this is often made difficult by phimosis (tightness of the foreskin). Külz (p. 40) found that among the youthful plantation workers in New Mecklenburg nearly a quarter were afflicted with phimosis, and often to such a degree that normal sex functioning was quite impossible. But such a condition does not seem to prevail among most of the primitive peoples practising circumcision. And, further, of what use would mutilations be that had nothing to do with tightness of the foreskin ?

The prolonged festivals and elaborate ceremonials which are so often connected with the circumcision of boys and of girls, or with their admission to the state of manhood and womanhood (without accompanying circumcision), are intended to preserve the event in the memory. The long ceremony is deeply impressed upon the mind, and forms a firm nucleus round which other memories cluster which otherwise would be lost in the humdrum of ordinary life. How could the time of entry into manhood remain without ceremonious festival ? This seems all the more necessary because the growth into manhood is gradual and almost unnoticeable, and if there were no ceremony, it would pass without making any impression. It is therefore the intention not only to give expression to the beginning virility, but above all to the admission into the league of youth (Schurtz, pp. 95, 96).



## VIII

### MATURITY AND DECLINE

AMONG all human races the signs of maturity appear later and less distinctly in the male than in the female. In Europeans the period of puberty coincides with the second period of increased bodily growth, which ceases in the male between the sixteenth and the eighteenth year, and in the female between the fourteenth and the sixteenth year. The end of the puberty period may, however, in individual cases, be postponed for some years. The exact time of the advent of sex maturity, which, on account of their menstruation, can be fixed much more readily in girls than in boys, varies not only individually, but racially. The same applies to the difference in time between the advent of maturity and the cessation of bodily growth. Sexual maturity, as well as the cessation of bodily growth, takes place much earlier in Europeans than in some of the primitive peoples. Among other primitive peoples, however, maturity occurs comparatively late, and bodily growth ceases shortly after. To the latter belong certainly some of the peoples living in the tropics.

The opinion still prevails that climate has a considerable influence on the advent of maturity. Rudolf Martin (1915) remarks: "Races living in the tropics

grow more quickly and mature earlier than the races living in temperate zones. This is undoubtedly due to the earlier advent of puberty."

As regards the Japanese, E. Baelz had already in 1891 disputed the statement that they mature early. He found, however, that the growth of both sexes ceases in Japan earlier than in Europe; still sex maturity in the female does not occur earlier. According to the concordant statements of female teachers of various girls' schools, the Japanese girls, in fact, reach maturity later than European girls, and half-caste girls take a medium position.

Since then reliable data about the advent of maturity among non-European races have seldom been given, but those to hand show that most probably even among coloured primitive people puberty generally occurs late.

Very important material has been collected by O. Reche in Matupi (New Pomerania, Melanesia), with the assistance of the Catholic mission of the place. He found that the rhythm of growth of the Melanesians corresponds on the whole to that of the Europeans, except that the growth ceases altogether a few years earlier. Development in height is finished on the whole in girls at the beginning of the seventeenth year, and in boys in the eighteenth year. But, as regards the advent of puberty, Reche's researches led to the surprising result that all Matupi girls, with the exception of those seventeen years old, had not yet men-



struated. Reche remarks that this strikingly late appearance of menstruation is also known to the missionaries, because in order to prevent early marriages they only consent to the marriage of a girl after the first menstruation has taken place. Reche's experience is in strong contradiction to the belief formerly taken for granted, for puberty occurs among these inhabitants of the tropics not only not earlier, but, on the contrary, later than with the Europeans living in temperate climates. Of importance is the fact that in the Matupi natives puberty coincides with the highest point of the curve of growth, namely, with the end of the development in height. Puberty commences when growth ceases. It almost seems as if the advent of maturity absorbs all the strength and hinders further growth. It is quite different with Europeans in this respect: the beginning of puberty falls with them in the second period of growth (in boys the twelfth to the sixteenth, in girls the eleventh to the fourteenth year), and therefore long before growth ceases altogether.

It would seem that the conditions existing among Europeans are the primitive state, as with the majority of animals also puberty begins before the cessation of growth.

Reche reports further that, corresponding to the late puberty, the secondary sexual characteristics also appear exceptionally late in Matupi children. This is the chief reason why the boys and girls, especially as they are small, appear remarkably young even

shortly before maturity, and why their age seems much less than it actually is. The first beginning of the change from the areola mamma to the budding breast shows itself among the Matupi girls not before the sixteenth year ; the development of the breast seems to coincide with the first menstruation. Axillary hair did not appear in sixteen-year-old Matupi girls, with one exception ; and it was scanty in those seventeen years old, though it is generally copious in adults. There was also no trace of a beard in seventeen-year-old boys, though it is well developed in the older men. It must be added that the late differentiation of secondary sexual characteristics is also noticeable among other coloured races, as, *e.g.*, among the Philip-pines and other Indonesian races.

Among the Papuans of New Guinea also sex maturity occurs late. As Richard Neuhaus wrote, according to information given by missionaries who have lived for a long time among the natives on Tami and among the Jabim, the first menstruation generally appears in the fifteenth to sixteenth year. Young males look very undeveloped up to the sixteenth year. Neuhaus thought this late maturity was the result of bad feeding, though it does not appear from his other descriptions that the economic conditions of the Papuans are especially unfavourable.

A. E. Jenks reports of the Igorots on Luzon that boys as well as girls attain puberty at a late age, generally between fourteen and sixteen years. The



civilised Ilkano people settled among the Igorots definitely declare that the girls do not menstruate before they have reached the sixteenth or seventeenth year. A considerable error as regards their age seems to be excluded with these people, who have lived a long time under European influence.

Of the Andamanese, a pigmy race, Portman and Molesworth write that puberty appears in boys and girls round about the fifteenth year. Bodily growth is finished at eighteen years, and is in any case after maturity very trivial.

Eugen Fischer makes the following statements about the Bastards in German South-west Africa : " In one family five out of six daughters menstruated for the first time at the age of fifteen, one at the age of sixteen. One Bastard woman had first menstruated at the age of seventeen, three of her daughters at thirteen, the fourth, who was anæmic, at seventeen. Another Bastard woman, who herself had her first menstruation at fifteen, had two daughters from a white man who had reached puberty at sixteen and seventeen years of age. A girl with distinct anæmia stated that she had had her first period at sixteen years, her sister even as late as eighteen." Fischer knows of three girls that became mature at sixteen, fourteen, and thirteen years. L. Schultze reports that with the Hottentots the first menstruation appears, as a rule, between the ages of thirteen and fifteen.

There is, unfortunately, no information to be had

about the negroes with regard to this subject. The puberty rites practised by them give no clue to the real age at the advent of puberty.

Aleš Hrdlička (pp. 125—129) tried to determine the age of puberty among Indian girls of the south-west of the United States by their height, as definite statements of age are not to be had. This method is not without objection, for it is certain that individuals who have attained puberty are decidedly taller than persons of the same age who have not reached maturity. Hrdlička found that of those examined in the twelfth or thirteenth year one-third of the Apache girls and as many as three-quarters of the Pima girls had already menstruated. In the age class of thirteen to fourteen years four-fifths of the Apache and nine-tenths of the Pima girls had already menstruated, while of forty-six older girls only one had not yet attained puberty. The first signs of breast development were noticed by Hrdlička in clothed Indian maidens whose ages he estimated to be from eleven to twelve years. But it was only between fifteen and seventeen that the girls acquired the typical womanly form; until then they have, as Hrdlička says, "a somewhat male appearance." In youths the beard begins to grow at the fifteenth or sixteenth year. The climate is moderate in the country of the Apache and Pima Indians; the days are decidedly hot in the low-lying regions, but the nights are generally cold in these regions, even in summer.

In comparison it may be noted that, according to



H. P. Bowditch's investigations in Boston, nearly four-fifths of the white girls born in America mature between the thirteenth and seventeenth year. Puberty is reached relatively most often between the ages of fourteen and fifteen, though over 40 per cent. of 575 girls examined had not yet menstruated at the completed fifteenth year.

Within one and the same race the conditions of life seem to have a great influence on the age of puberty and bodily development. Unfavourable conditions produce a retardation of puberty ; favourable conditions accelerate it. This may be the chief cause why the beginning of puberty varies individually by several years.

There exists so far no definite explanation of the racial differences in the age of puberty. Reche says, " It is conceivable that the characteristically late maturity of a tropical race (like that of the Melanesians) may gradually have been acquired by the unfavourable influence of too hot a climate or of continual under-feeding acting on many generations."

It is remarkable that, in contradistinction to the Melanesians, the Indians become mature very early, and the same applies most likely to the Australians. In India, as in Australia, sexual intercourse is begun at a very youthful age, among the girls often long before the first menstruation. It is possible that on account of this the age of puberty is lowered, so that girls who mature late are more easily injured and perish in greater number than the girls maturing

earlier, who are less injured by the premature sexual intercourse. The male sex may have been influenced in the same direction through heredity.

Just as physical maturity, so is the cessation of generative power and bodily decline more marked in women than in men. In Middle and Northern Europe, procreation generally ceases with women of an age between forty-five and fifty years. Numerous birth statistics from all countries of this continent show that birth in women over fifty years old is very rare. It is not quite clear how the case stands in this respect among the coloured races. Hrdlička reports of the North American Indian women that with them the climacterium occurs apparently at about the same age as with European women. It must be taken into consideration that accurate statements of age are wanting, and that the age of Indian women can easily be greatly overrated. Otherwise it has generally been reported of coloured women that they age rapidly, and that their reproductive period is comparatively short. In North-west Brazil the Indian girls marry as soon as in their tenth to twelfth year, on account of their rapid development. Early maturity and marriage may be one of the chief causes of their rapid decline. The Indian women are generally beyond their prime at the age of twenty. Their straight figure is frequently covered with a disgusting accumulation of fat, and the elasticity of movement gives way to indolence. Other women become very thin after several confinements,



their features become sharp and bony, and among old women one often comes across real hag-like creatures with half-blind, running eyes (Koch-Grünberg, II., p. 149).

In India the women of the Dravidian as well as of the Mongolian races age rapidly. Their generative power rarely lasts longer than the beginning of the forties. Among the pigmies the time of procreation is said to be equally short (Portman and Molesworth). Spencer and Gillen say that with the Australian women a rapid bodily decline takes place as early as the twenty-fifth and at the latest in the thirtieth year, which cannot be attributed to exceptional privations or harsh treatment. The Australian women apparently reach the age of fifty years or more only exceptionally.

Jochelson (pp. 413 *et seq.*) writes that the Koryak women age very rapidly. They cease to bear children at about the age of forty. Other travellers have made statements about the great age that the Koryaks are said to attain. Jochelson's thorough-going investigations showed that of 284 persons only thirteen could possibly have been over sixty-five years old, and among them there was only one really old man.

Schultze (p. 297) mentions two Hottentot women who had given birth at the age of forty-seven, and another who still had her period at fifty-five. Among the negresses late births also occur. Unfortunately, ethnographical literature only rarely gives facts with regard to this subject.

## IX

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